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Sociology of the Quran Part II

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What is History?

History may be defined in three ways. In fact, there are three closely connected disciplines related to history.

1. Knowledge of the incidents, events, circumstances, and condi-tions of people living in the past in relation to the present conditions and circumstances. All situations, conditions, events, and episodes which take place belong to the present, that is, the time during which they take shape, are judged, reported, and recorded as matters of the day by daily newspapers. However, as soon as their time elapses, they are merged with the past and become a part of history.

Hence, history, in this sense, is the knowledge of the bygone incidents, events, conditions and circumstances of the people in the past. Biographies, records of battles and conquests, and all such chronicles compiled in the past, or at the present, by all nations, come under this category.

History in this sense is, firstly, the knowledge of the particular; that is, it is the knowledge of a sequence of personal and individual episodes, not the knowledge of a series of general laws and relation-ships. Secondly, it is a study of narratives and traditions, not a rational discipline. Thirdly, it is the knowledge of `being,' not that of `becoming.' Fourthly, it is related to the past, not to the present. This type of history we shall term as `traditional history' (tarikh naqli).

2. History is the knowledge of laws that appear to govern the life of the past, obtained through investigation and analysis of the past events.

The stuff with which the traditional history is concerned, i.e. the events and incidents of the past, provides the rudimentary and basic material for this study. For the study of history in this sense, such events and incidents are similar to the material gathered by a natural scientist for his laboratory analysis and investigation to discover certain general laws, through induction, regarding the nature and properties of his material and the causal relations governing its changes.

The historian, in this analytical endeavor, wishes to uncover the true nature of historical events and their causal relationship, and to discover the general and universal laws applicable to all similar events of the past and the present. We shall call history in this sense `scientific history'.

Although the object of research and the subject matter of scienti-fic history are the events and episodes of the past, the laws which it deduces are not specifically confined to the past. They have the ability of being generalized in order to be applied to the present and the future also. This aspect of history makes it very useful, making it one of the sources of man's knowledge regarding himself, and enables him to exercise control over his own future.

The difference between the task of a researcher in the field of scientific history and a researcher in the natural sciences is notable. The material of research for the natural scientist is a chain of real and verifi-able occurrences that are present.

Hence, necessarily, all his investiga-tions, analyses, and results are empirical and verifiable. But the material on which a historian works

belongs to the past and does not exist in the present. What is accessible to a historian now is only a bundle of chronicles about the past.

A historian is like a judge in a court of law who decides on the basis of circumstantial evidence and indications on record in his files, not on the basis of the testimony of any eye-witness. In this way, the analysis of a historian is logical, rational, and mental, not one based upon verifiable external evidence. A historian makes his analysis in the laboratory of his mind and intellect, with the instru-ments of logic and inference, not in the external physical laboratory with instruments of observation and measurement.

Hence, the job of a historian is more akin to that of a philosopher than of a scientist. Scientific history, like traditional history, is concerned with the past, not with the present. It is the knowledge of `being' not of `becoming.' But unlike traditional history it is general, not particular; it is rational, not based upon tradition.

Scientific history is actually a branch of sociology; i.e. it is a socio-logical study of the societies of the past. The subject of sociology includes the study of the past and the present societies. However, if we restrict sociology to the study of contemporary societies, then scientific history and sociology should be considered as two disciplines, separate but closely related, complementary, and dependent upon each other.

3. Philosophy of history is based upon the knowledge of gradual changes and transformations which lead societies from one stage to another. It deals with the laws governing these transformations and changes. In other words, it is the science of `becoming' of societies, not of their `being' only.

Perhaps this question might have arisen in the mind of the honoured reader, whether it is possible for societies to have simul-taneously `being' as well as `becoming,' and that being should be the subject of one discipline, viz. scientific history, and `becoming' of societies the subject of another discipline, viz. philosophy of history. Isn't any synthesis between the two impossible, as `being' implies rest and `becoming' movement? Only one of the two should be chosen. Our picture of the societies of the past should be either a picture of `being' or a picture of `becoming'.

Probably the honourable reader may pose this problem in more general and comprehensive terms: Our picture of the universe as a whole-and of society as a part of it-is either a static or a dynamic one. If the universe or society is static then it has `being,' not becoming; and if it is changing and dynamic, it has `becoming' and not `being.'

From this point of view, the most significant division of the schools of philosophy is made. It has been said that philosophical systems are divided into two main groups: the philosophies of `being' and the philo-sophies of `becoming.' The philosophies of `being' are those which hold that being and non-being are incompatible with each other, and they. regard contradictions as impossible. It is supposed that if there is `being' there cannot be `non-being' and if there is `non-being' there is no `being.'

Hence one has to choose one of these two alternatives. As being is necessary and there is nothing except being in the world and society, the world is governed by rest and stillness. But the philo-sophies of becoming,

on the other hand, hold that being and non-being co-exist in each and every single moment, and this is what we call motion. Motion is nothing except that a thing `is' and at the same time it `is not.'

Hence, the philosophy of being and the philosophy of becoming are two opposite views regarding existence, and one has to choose any one of the two. If we associate ourselves with the first view, we should hold that societies have `being' not `becoming,' and, contrarily, if we associate ourselves with the second view, it should be assumed that societies have `becoming' and not `being.' Either we can have scientific history, in the light of the above discussion, without having any philosophy of history, or we can have philosophy of history without a scientific history.

The answer to these questions lies in the fact that such thinking about being and nothingness, about motion and rest, and about incompatibility of opposites, is a characteristic feature of the Western though and originates in the West's ignorance of the philosophical problems o: being (problems concerning existence) and specially the profound problem of principality of existence (asalat al-wujud) and a number o: other problems related to it.

Firstly, take the statements that `being' is synonymous with rest, or, in other words, rest is being, and that motion is a synthesis between being and non-being and means unity of two opposites. These notions are some of the gross errors made by some schools of Western philoso-phy.

Secondly, what is maintained here has nothing to do with the above-mentioned philosophical problem? The positions taken here are based upon the hypothesis that society, like all other living beings, follows two different sets of laws: one set of laws which is confined to a particular species, and the other set of laws which deals with changes of species and their transformation into one another. We shall term the first kind of laws, `the laws of being', and the other, `the laws of becoming.'

Incidentally, this point has been realized by some sociologists. Auguste Comte is one of them. Raymond Aron says about him:

Statics and dynamics are two basic categories of Auguste Comte's sociology... Statics consists essentially in examining, in analyzing what Comte calls the social consensus (social unanimity). A society is comparable to a living orga-nism.

It is impossible to study the functioning of an organ without placing it in the context of living creature. By the same token it is impossible to study politics of the state without placing them in the context of the society at a given moment ....As for dynamics at the outset it consists merely of the des-cription of the successive stages through which human societies pass. [1]

If we take into consideration any species from among the species of living beings, like mammals, reptiles, birds etc., we shall see that they have a group of particular laws specific to their kind, which govern them as long as they are related to that particular species. (For example, the laws related to. an animal's embryonic stages, its health and survival, its conditions of sickness and disease, its food habits and nourishment, reproduction and growth, or the laws related to the patterns of its habitation or migration, and its mating habits.)

But according to the theory of evolution and development of species, in addition to certain specific laws that operate within the species, there is another set of laws which are concerned with the process of evolution and transformation of .the lower species into the higher ones. These laws are formulated philosophically, and sometimes termed as the `philosophy of evolution' as distinct from the science of biology.

As society is considered to be a living organism, it is also governed by two types of laws: biological laws and evolutionary laws. The laws which are concerned with the causes of birth and decline of civiliza-tions, and the conditions which determine social existence, are laws which are universally applicable to all the varying forms and changes taking place in various societies.

We shall call them the `laws of being' of societies. And those laws which are concerned with the causes of evolution of societies from one epoch to another and from one system to another system, would be termed as the `laws of becoming' of societies. The difference between them will become clearer when we discuss each of the two types of problems.

Hence history, according to its third meaning, is the study of evolution of societies from one stage to another. It is not merely the knowledge of the existence of the society at a particular stage or at all stages. For the sake of avoiding any possibility of confusion, these problems should not be mixed with the problems of scientific history. We shall call the study of these problems the `philosophy of history.'

Very often the problems related with scientific history, which deals with the non-evolutionary movement of society, are not clearly differentiated from the problems of philosophy of history, which deals with the evolutionary movement of society. This is what gives rise to misunderstandings and errors.

Philosophy of history, like scientific history deals with the general not with the particular. It is rational (`aqli), not traditional (naqli). It is the knowledge of becoming of societies, not of their being. And also, contrary to the case of scientific history, the use of the word `history' ir. the term `philosophy of history' should not lead us to think that philosophy of history is related to the past; rather it means that philo-sophy of history is the study of a continuous stream which originated in the past and continues to flow towards the future. Time, for the sake of study of these types of problems, cannot be assumed to be merely a container [occupied by historical reality], but it is to be regarded as one of the dimensions of this reality.

The study of history is useful in all of its three senses. Even the descriptive traditional history, which deals with the lives and characters of individuals, may be useful, moving, directive, educative and constructive. But it depends upon who the individuals whose life histories are discussed are, and what conclusions we infer from their lives. Men are made, according to the law of imitation, under the influence of the behaviour, treatment, resolutions, moral habits, and companionship of their fellowmen.

As the lives of contemporaries serve as a lesson and example for man, and he learns manners and customs from his fellow beings-or, according to Luqman, learns good manners even from the ill-mannered, so that he does

not commit their mistakes-the same principle is applicable to the biographies of the men belonging to the past. History, like a film, transforms the past into the present.

The Quran itself refers to the beneficial aspects of the lives of such worthy people whom it considers as fit and imitable models. About the Prophet (S), the Quran says:

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴿٢١﴾

"Verily, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for whosoever hopes for God and the Last Day, and remembers God much." (33:21)

About Abraham (A), the Quran says:

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ...

"You have a good example in Abraham and those with him ...." (60:4)

Whenever the Quran refers to the characters of persons as examples for others, it does not give importance to their worldly positions, but always emphasizes the moral and humanistic aspects of their personali-ties.

It is from this viewpoint that the Quran remembers Luqman, a Negro slave, as a wise man, although he was neither a king, nor a weal-thy man, nor a famous philosopher. He is introduced to the world as a paragon of wisdom. The examples cited in the Quran of the true believers-one belonging to the Pharaoh's tribe and another mentioned in Surat Yasin-also belong to the same category.

In this book, where we intend to discuss sociology and history from the Islamic point of view, we will confine our attention solely to scientific history and philosophy of history because of their relevance to the world outlook of Islam, Accordingly, we will discuss these two topics somewhat elaborately, starting with the nature of scientific history.

Note

1. Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Thought, vol. I. pp. 85,86.

Scientific History

To begin with, I would like to remind that scientific history is to in the light of the view discussed earlier that the society has a reality, and personality independent of the individual. If society does- not have a reality independent of its members, there may not be any laws except those governing individuals,' and, consequently, scientific history, which is the science of the laws and principles that govern societies, would be pointless.

That history is governed by laws is a necessary corollary of the proposition that history has its own nature, which again follows from the proposition that society has its own nature and reality. In the context of scientific history, the following problems should be studied.

1. As has been pointed out earlier, scientific history is based on traditional history. Traditional history provides the material for the laboratory of scientific history. Hence, firstly, it should be thoroughly investigated whether the contents of traditional history are authentic and reliable. If the material is not reliable, all research and scientific inference regarding the laws governing the societies of the past would be futile and pointless.

2. If we proceed with the supposition that traditional history is reliable, and that society has an essence and personality independent of individuals, then deduction of general laws from historical events and episodes would depend upon the hypothesis that the law of causation, or causal determinism, governs the sphere of human activities-that is the sphere of problems associated with human freedom and will, which are expressed in historical events.

Without accepting it; the laws of history can neither be generalized nor universalized, nor can there be any orderly system of such laws. The question is whether the law of causation governs the course of history, and if it does, what are we to think of human freedom and responsibility?

3. Is history materialistic in nature and governed by materialistic forces? Is the principal force dominating human history a material force? Are intellectual and spiritual forces secondary, subordinate, and dependent upon the material forces that shape history? Contrarily, is it true that history is essentially spiritual, and the dominating force of history a spiritual force, the material forces being secondary, subsidiary, and subservient to it?

In other words, is history in itself `idealistic’? Or do we have a third alternative, i.e. history possesses essentially a composite character, governed by two or more forces? Is it true that a number of material and spiritual forces-more or less harmonious and occasionally conflicting, depending on a system-govern history?

1. Authenticity and Inauthenticity of Traditional History

There are some who severely criticize traditional history, considering it as a series of fabrications of the narrators based on the histo-rian's personal interests and objectives, his social affiliations, or on national, communal or religious prejudices-all of which have more or less led to fabrications or distortions.

The historians have compiled history according to their own wishes, and even those who, from a moral point of view, refrained from deliberate fabrication and distortion of facts, were selective in their choice while recording incidents.

That is, they have invariably related only those incidents which did not go against their objectives and beliefs. They avoided giving accounts of such events which happened to be against their beliefs and feelings.

In this way, though they might not have added anything of their own, or recorded any fabricated material, yet through their choice they gave history their desired form. A significant event or an impor-tant personality can be studied and analysed only when all the relevant material is accessible to the researcher.

If only a fraction of the required material essential for the study is available and the rest is not, the true face of reality is hidden and, replaced by a radically different face.

The pessimism of these critics of traditional history is similar to the attitude of some skeptics among Islamic jurisprudents (fuqaha' or mujtahidun) about Islamic tradition (hadith) and narrations (riwayat)-an attitude which has been termed “insidad bab al-`ilm” (“closure of the door of knowledge”).

Some have made such ironic statements about history as, “History means, a series of events that never occurred, recorded by a person who was not at all present at the time.” A journalist is quoted to have said that “realities are sacred, but one has freedom of faith [to believe or disbelieve them].” Some are not so pessimistic, but they, too, prefer to be skeptical regarding history.

In the book What is History?, the following statement has been quoted from Sir George Clark:

... Knowledge of the past that has come down through one or more human minds, and has been processed by them, and therefore cannot consist of elemental and impersonal atoms which nothing can alter ....The exploration seems to be endless, and some impatient scholars take refuge in skepticism, or at least in the doctrine that, since all historical judgments involve persons and points of view, one is as good as another and there is no `objective' historical truth. [1]

The fact is that though we may not entirely trust even the records of the most reliable historians, but there are, firstly, a series of definite indubitable in history, similar to the self-evident postulates accepted in other disciplines. These can form the subject of the historian's study, analysis, and research.

Secondly, the researcher can exercise his discre-tion in reaching a conclusion regarding the truth or falsehood of some narrations by subjecting them to critical scrutiny. Today we see that researchers have conclusively proved the unreliability of certain matters which were exaggerated out of proportion and were held in reverence for several centuries. The story of burning of the library at Alexandria, which began to be circulated since the seventh century of Hijrah, gradually found its way into several books of history.

But the findings of the last century researchers have proved it absolutely base-less, only a fabrication of some prejudiced Christians. In the same fashion, sometimes certain truths are obscured and hidden, but after sometime they are somehow uncovered. Therefore, it is not justifiable to be totally skeptical of the historical records.

2. Causation in History

Does absolute causation govern history? If the law of causality dominates history, it would be essential to accept that occurrence of every incident in itself should be certain and inevitable, and that some type of determinism prevails over history. If determinism governs history, then, where is the place for the individual's freedom and choice?

If in reality occurrence of events is deterministic, then no one has any responsibility, and no one may deserve any praise or reproach for his deeds. If the law of causation does not govern history, there can be no universality, and if there is no possibility of generalization or universalization, history cannot have any law because law is dependent upon universality, and universality is a corollary of the principle of causality.

This is the main difficulty with regard to scientific history and philosophy of history. There are some who, on the basis of the prin-ciple of causation and the principle of universality, negate freedom and choice. They maintain that whatever is accepted in the name of freedom is not actually freedom. Contrarily, there are others who approve the principle of freedom and negate the view that history follows certain laws. Many sociologists accept the incompatibility of causality and freedom, and, therefore, they accept causality and negate freedom.

Hegel, and Marx following him, accept historical determinism. According to Hegel and Marx, freedom is nothing but consciousness of historical necessity. In the book Marx and Marxism, the following passage of Engels is quoted from his work Anti-Duhring:

Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him freedom is the appreciation of necessity. Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood. Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and those which govern the bodily and mental existence of men themselves.[2]

And also in the same book, after a brief discussion of the view that man can and should act according to his particular historical conditions and in the direction determined by those conditions, Engels says:

Identifying and understanding these given conditions render human action more effective. Every act in the opposite direction amounts to resisting and obstructing the historic course. To act in the direction determined by the historic course means moving within the course of history and participating in the process.

But the question, as to what is meant by freedom, still remains to be answered. The Marxist school answers that freedom of the individual lies in

his appreciation of the historical necessity, and the social movement towards which the whole course of history is directed.[3]

It is evident that these remarks do not solve the difficulty. The real problem regarding man's relationship with historical conditions is as follows: Does man control historical conditions? Can he give history his preferred direction? Is he able to change the course of history?

If man is unable to direct the course of history, or change it, he is forced to follow the course of history. This is the only way through which he can not only survive but also continue to evolve. If he goes in a direction opposite to that of the historic course, he will definitely perish.

Now the question arises whether man is free or determined to participate in the course of history. If we accept the principle of pri-ority of society over the individual and that the consciousness and awareness of the individual and his feelings are moulded by historical and social conditions-especially economic conditions-does there remain any room for individual freedom?

Moreover, what is meant by the statement that `freedom is the consciousness of necessity'? Does it mean that an individual whose life is threatened by a storm and who has the full consciousness of the fact that after some time the tide would take him down into the depths of the sea, or an individual falling from a high cliff who is conscious that according to the law of gravity his bones would be crushed into pieces within a short time, is `free' to drown into the sea or fall into the valley?

According to the materialistic theory of historical determinism, social conditions act as restraining factors for man, which determine his direction and mould his personality, his consciousness, his determination and choice. Man is nothing but an empty pot, merely a raw material in the hands of social conditions. Man is the product of the conditions, which are not created by him. Pre-ceding conditions determine the future course for man. It is not man who determines the future course of historical conditions. On the basis of these notions, freedom has no sense and meaning.

In reality, human freedom cannot be conceived apart from the theory of (specific human) nature. According to this theory, in the general course of the essential movement of the universe, man enters into the world with a certain dimension that is over and above the physical universe, and this extra dimension is the essence and core of human existence.

Afterwards, under the influence of the environ-mental factors, man's personality develops and matures. It is this existential dimension that gives man a unique human personality, so that he may rule over the tide of history and determine its course. I have already discussed this problem under the heading “Determinism or Freedom,” and I shall discuss this issue further under the title, “The Role of Personality in History,” when discussing the historical role of heroic figures of history.

Human freedom, in the sense pointed out, is neither inconsistent with the law of causation, nor is it incompatible with the universality of the laws of history. That man, in spite of his freedom of choice, his will and his thought, should have to adopt a predetermined, specific, and an inviolable course in

social life-a freedom loaded with necessity-does not imply anything but the rule of blind necessity over man and his will.

The problem regarding history being subject to laws and their universality poses another difficulty. It is revealed through the study of historical events and incidents that sometimes a sequence of trivial accidents change the course of history. Of course, the accidents- contrary to the belief of some people-do not occur without any cause; such events are called `accidents' because they cannot be explained by a general and universal system of causal laws.

If accidents do not follow any universal law and have played an effective role in the movement of history, then history would be regarded as devoid of any kind of specific laws. Among the accidents which have been effective in deter-mining the course of history, the nose of Cleopatra, the well-known queen of Egypt, has become proverbial. Many times there have been in history where, according to the well-known saying, "A waft has ruffled the pages of history."

In his book What is History? Edward Hallett Carr writes:

The other source of the attack is the famous crux of Cleopatra's nose. This is the theory that history is, by and large, a chapter of accidents, a series of events determined by chance coincidences, and attributable only to the most casual causes.

The result of the Battle of Actum was due not to the sort of causes commonly postulated by historians, but to Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra. When Bajazet was deterred by an attack of gout from marching into central Europe, Gibbon observed that "an acrimonious honour falling on. a single fibre of a man may prevent or suspend the misery of nations."

When King Alexander of Greece died in the autumn of 1920 from the bite of a pet monkey, this accident touched off a train of events which led Sir Winston Churchill to remark that "a quarter of a million persons died of this monkey's bite." Or take again Trotsky's comment on the fever contracted while shooting ducks which put him out of action at a critical point of his quarrel with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin in the autumn of 1923: "One can foresee a revolution or a war, but it is impossible to foresee the consequences of an autumn shooting -trip for wild ducks." [4]

In the Islamic world the instance of the defeat of Marwan ibn Muhammad, the last Umayyad caliph, is an evidence of the role of accident deciding the fate of history. During his last battle with the `Abbasids, Marwan, feeling the necessity to answer the call of nature, went aside to ease himself.

Accidentally, a person from the enemy's camp happened to pass by, he saw and killed him immediately. The news of his death spread among the soldiers of his army. As such an accident was never antici-pated, his soldiers became panicky and fled from the battlefield. The Umayyad dynasty was thus overthrown. It was on this occasion that it was said:

ذَهَبَتِ الدَّوْلَة بِبوْلَة

("a dynasty was swept away by urine.").

Carr, after explaining that every accident, far from being without cause, is governed by a chain of causes and effects, which terminates another causal chain, says:

...How can one discover in history a coherent sequence of cause and effect, how can we find any meaning in history, when our sequence is liable to be broken or deflected at any moment by some other, and from our point of view, irrelevant sequence? [5]

The solution to this difficulty is dependent upon the question whether society and history have a particular direction. If history in itself has direction, the role of accidents would be insignificant, which means although certain accidents may change the position of some pawns on the chess-board of history, they do not exercise any signifi-cant influence on the course of history as a whole.

At the most, they can accelerate or arrest it for a moment. But if history is devoid of nature and personality and does not follow a path determined by its own nature, it would be without any particular direction, and also it would be impossible to formulate any universal laws and to forecast the future.

In my view, history has a specific nature and personality which is a composite product of the individual human beings who make it, and who have a natural urge for perfection. I believe that the role of accidental events does not affect historical necessity and universality of history.

Montesquieu has beautifully explained the role of accidents in history, a part of which I have quoted earlier. He says:

...if the outcome of a single battle, i.e. a particular cause, was the ruin of a state, there was a general cause which decreed that, that state was destined to perish through a single battle. [6]

He further says:

It was not the affair of Poltava that ruined Charles. Had he not been destroyed at that place, he would have been in another. The casualties of the fortune are easily repaired; but who can be guarded against events that incessantly arise from the nature of things? 7

Notes

1. E. H. Carr, What is History?, p. 8.

2. Andre Peter , Marx and Marxism, Persian translation by Shuja` al-Din Diya'iyan, p. 249, Appendix V.

3. Ibid., pp. 37,38.

4. E.H. Carr, op. cit. pp. 144, 145.

5. Ibid., p. 146.

6. Raymond Aron, op. cit., p. 27.

7. Ibid.

Is History Materialistic in Nature?

What is the nature of history? Is the real nature of history cultural, political, economic, religious, or moral? Is history materialistic or non--materialistic, or a combination of both? This is one of the main questions related with history. Unless this question is not answered, our understanding of history would not be correct and sound.

It is evident that all the above-mentioned intellectual and material factors have participated in the fabric of history. But the question arises, which of them is the determining factor that plays the most important role and is prior to all others. There has been controversy as to which of the factors represents the real spirit of history and its essence, and which of the factors is able to subordinate and explain the subsidiary role of other factors. Which of them is the base, to which others serve as superstructure?

Usually, history is compared to a machine with many motors, in which every motor is independent of the others. In fact, history is considered to have a complex not a simple nature. But if we regard it as having many motors, then what are we to think of its evolution and its course of development?

It is not possible that many motors, each of them having a specific momentum pushing history in its own direction, could carry history on a specific course of evolution, unless we consider the above-mentioned factors as the moving forces subordinate to a super-force, the spirit of history.

This spirit, by employing various historical forces,. drives it towards a predetermined evolutionary goal. It is this spirit which actually represents the essence of history. But this interpretation is different from the doctrine of monistic view of his-tory. The nature of history is synonymous with the spirit of history, and it cannot be derived from, what are called, the moving forces of history.

In our age, a theory which has attracted many supporters is that of `historical materialism' or the `dialectical materialistic theory of his-tory.' Historical materialism, which is an economic interpretation of history and an economic-historical view of man-not a humanistic interpretation of economy or history-explains every human activity from the economic point of view.

In other words, according to historical materialism, history is materialistic in nature and essence and follows a dialectical process. This means that the basis of all historical move-ments, revolutions, and historical manifestations of every society, is its economic structure.

They are the material forces of production of society and its relations of production which fashion history and give direction to all intellectual manifestations of a society like morality, science, philosophy, religion, law, and culture. These manifestations change with changes in the mode of production and relations of pro-duction.

The expression that history is dialectical in nature means that the evolutionary movements of history are dialectical movements caused by a series of dialectical contradictions, which are concomitant with those contradictions. Dialectical contradictions are different from non-dialectical

ones in the sense that every phenomenon is compelled to give rise to its own negation from within. As a result of a series of changes caused by this inner contradiction, the phenomenon under-goes a radical qualitative change at a higher level, wherein the two lower stages attain perfection through synthesis.

Thus historical materialism is comprised of two basic stands: first-ly, that the nature of history is materialistic; secondly, its movements are dialectical movements. Here we shall study the first problem. The second shall be taken up while dealing with the evolution and develop-ment of history.

The theory of materialistic nature of history is based on a series of certain philosophical, psychological, and sociological principles that logically lead to other theories of ideological significance. I would like to throw some light on this subject, especially because some Muslim writers claim that although Islam does not approve of the philosophical materialism, it accepts historical materialism.

Consequent-ly they have based their own historical and sociological views on this theory. It is, therefore, essential to discuss this problem in some detail, first expounding the foundations and principles on which this theory is based and then the conclusions which are derived from them. After this exposition we shall evaluate the basis of this theory from the Islamic and scientific points of view.

Basic Principles of Historical Materialism

1. Priority of matter over spirit

Man has body as well as spirit. Human body and its functionings are the subject of biological, physical, and physiological studies. But the spirit and processes related with the soul are the subject of philosophi-cal and psychological studies. Thoughts, beliefs, feelings, desires, concepts, and ideologies represent spiritual processes.

The principle of priority of matter over spirit implies that spiritual processes are not independent, but they are only a sequence of reflections of material processes; i.e., they are caused by the influence of the conscious matter on the nerves and the brain.

These processes are significant only to the extent that they form a connecting link between the internal physical forces and the external world, but they can never dominate human existence in the manner in which its opposite forces, i.e. the material forces, do.

For example, the psychical processes may be compared to the headlights of an automobile. An automobile cannot move about without its headlights in the dark hours of night. It finds its way in the light of its headlamp. But what drives it is not the headlamp but its engine.

If these psychical processes, such as thoughts, beliefs, theories and ideologies, participate in the drama of material forces of history, they assist the movement of history, but they in themselves are unable to generate any movement. They can never be compared to the material forces.

Psychical processes are not independent; they depend for their existence on matter. The real forces are those which signify human existence and are identified with material forces, and which are measur-able in material terms.

In this way, the psychical processes are not capable of generating movement and directing the course of history, and cannot be considered as a `lever' for the movement of society. The spiritual values have absolutely no chance to become the motivating force, the source, and the goal of a social movement, unless they serve to support and explain the material values of history and society.

Accordingly, one has to be very careful in interpreting history. This theory emphasizes that we should be cautious not to be deceived by the appearances. Occasionally, at some point in history, it may appear that a thought, belief, or a faith has brought about change in a society, and stimulated it at a particular stage of development.

But if we analyse history correctly, we shall see that such beliefs do not have an independent existence; they are only the mirror-image or reflection of material forces of society. There were actually material forces, which in the guise of those beliefs, moved and changed the society.

Material forces are the progressive, leading force of history. They are repre-sented, technically, by the society's system of production, and, from the humanistic point of view, by the deprived and exploited class of society.

Feuerbach, the famous materialist philosopher, from whom Marx himself has borrowed many of his ideas, raises the following questions:

What is theory? What is praxis? What is the difference between the two?

He himself answers that:

Everything which is confined to the mind is theoretical. Whatever moves the minds of many is practical necessity. It is action which unites many minds together and organizes the masses, and in this manner finds a place for itself in the world. [1]

And Marx, his faithful pupil, writes:

It is obvious that the weapon of criticism cannot replace criticism of weap-ons. Only the material forces can defeat other material forces.

Marx does not believe in the independence of non-material forces. He, at the most, recognizes their value in relation to material existence: He says: “Theory also, only by taking roots into the lives of the masses, can be transformed into a material force.” [2]

Priority of matter over spirit, priority of the body over the mind, inessentiality of spiritual forces; and rejection of intellectual and spiritual values as fundamental, are among the basic principles of the philosophy of materialism.

Quite contrary to this philosophy is the other philosophy which is based on the essentiality of spirit, according to which all the fundamen-tal dimensions of human existence cannot be interpreted by means of matter or its modes. In the domain of human existence, spirit is a fundamental reality, and the spiritual energies are independent of the material energies.

In this way, the spiritual forces, i.e. the intellectual forces, faith, belief and emotions, are regarded as independent factors for some movements at the individual level and at the level of society. They serve as `levers' which can be used for the movement of history. Many of historical movements have ultimately arisen because of these `levers,' especially those which belong to a higher human plane. The higher individual and collective

movements are independently origina-ted by these forces, and derive their sublimity from these very forces.

Psychic forces sometimes strongly influence physical and material powers, not only at the level of voluntary activity, but also at the level of mechanical, involuntary, and physiological activity, and employ them for attaining their own specific purpose. The effects of psychical suggestions for curing physical ailments and the miraculous effects of hypnotism, which belong to the same category, cannot be overlooked.

Knowledge and faith, particularly faith, and specifically whenever these two psychic forces are harmonized, a great and useful force is generated which can create wonders by playing an extraordinarily prog-ressive and revolutionary role in transforming the course of history.

Independence of mind and spiritual powers is one of the funda-mental principles of “epistemological realism.”[3]

2. Primacy and priority of material needs over intellectual needs

Man has at least two types of needs for his social existence. First-ly, there are the material needs, such as the need for bread, water, shelter, dress, medicine, and other such needs. Secondly, there are the intellectual needs, such as the needs for education, knowledge, litera-ture, art, philosophical speculation, faith, ideology, prayer, morality, and other such things. These two types of needs accompany man in all situations and conditions. But which of them precedes the other? material needs or intellectual needs? Or none of them?

The theory of priority of material needs is based on the notion that material needs are more important and preferable. Their importance is not because of the fact that at the initial stage man is in pursuit of material needs, and when these needs are satisfied, he can divert his attention and energies towards the attainment of intellectual pursuits, but because material needs are also the basis and the source of intellectual needs.

It is not that man is created with two types of needs and two types of instincts: material needs and material instincts, intellectual needs and intellectual instincts; rather man has been created with only one type of needs and one type of instincts. Intellectual needs are only secondary needs, which serve the sole purpose of gratifying the material needs in a better manner.

This is the reason why the intellectual needs, from the point of view of form, quality, and also essence, are subordinated to the mate-rial needs. In every age, man has given a specific form, character, and mode to his material needs, according to the stage of development of the means of production. His intellectual requirements, which originate in his material requirements, correspond in form, mode, and quality to his material necessities.

Hence, there is a twofold relationship of prio-rity between the material needs and the intellectual needs: priority of existence, i.e. intellectual needs are the by-products of the material needs; and the priority of essence, i.e. the form, quality, and nature of the intellectual needs remain subordinated to that of the material needs. In his book Historical Materialism P. Royan quotes from page 92 of Hymen Louis' book Philosophical Ideas:

Man's material course of existence led him to propound theories correspond-ing to the material needs of the time about his world, society, art, and morality; all intellectual manifestations are the resultant products of material conditions and the mode of production. [4]

Accordingly, scientific judgment, philosophical thought, artistic and aesthetic sensibility, moral values, and religious propensities of every human being are subject to his way of .life. Applying this maxim,

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you think," which refers to individuals, to the society, it may be said: "Tell me what is the degree of development of the means of production, and what are the economic relations among the members of a society, and I will tell you what ideology, which philosophy and what ethics and religion the members of that society follow."

Radically opposed to this theory is the theory of independence of intellectual needs. According to it, although in the individual human being the material needs sprout up early in life-as soon as a child is born he gropes for his mother's breast--the intellectual needs which are hidden inside the human nature, blossom gradually.

During the later stages of his development and maturity, man sacrifices his material needs for the sake of intellectual needs. Or, in other words, the urge of intellectual enjoyment is stronger and more indigenous to human nature than the physical enjoyments and attractions.[5]

The greater an individual's education and training, the more he considers his material needs, material enjoyments, and material existence as subordinate to his intellectual needs, intellectual enjoyments-and intellectual existence. Society also follows the same principle.

In primitive societies material needs are more dominant than intellectual needs; but as society advances and becomes more refined, intellectual needs assume more important position and become the goal of human life, while material needs, becoming secondary, are demoted to a lower place as mere means to attain higher ends. [6]

3. Priority of action over thought

Man is a being who thinks, understands, and acts. Is action prior to thought or vice versa? Is the essence of man action or thought? Does human nobility depend upon action, or does it depend upon thought? Is man the product of action or thought?

Historical materialism is based on the idea of independence of action and its priority over thought. It considers action as the base, and thought as its offshoot. Ancient logic and philosophy considered thought as the key to action.

According to that logic, thought is divided into concepts and judgments, each of which may be further divided into a priori (self-evident) and theoretic. A priori ideas are acknow-ledged as the key to theoretical ideas. In that logic and philosophy, the essence of man (the self) is regarded as pure thought. Human perfection and nobility is seen as lying in wisdom. The `perfect man' is synony-mous with the `man of wisdom." [7]

But historical materialism is established on the principle that action is the key to thought and the criterion of thought. The essence of man is his

productive activity. Action is the source of man's identity and it moulds him also. Marx says, “The entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the begetting of man through human labour. [8]

And Engels says, “Man himself is the creation of action.” [9]From the very beginning, man, instead of contemplating over natural calamities, conquered the external environment by means of his hard labour, and in the same way (through revolutionary action) he overpowered the powerful aggressors to establish a society according to his own desires. In the book Marx and Marxism, the author says:

Whereas in the philosophy of being (a philosophy that interprets the world in terms of “being” as opposed to the philosophy of “becoming,” which interprets the world in terms of motion. Marxism belongs to the group of the philosophies of “becoming”) it was customary at first to set forth the ideas and the principles from which practical conclusions are derived; praxis (practical philosophy), on the other hand, regards action as the origin and basis of all thought. It replaces the faith in thought by the philosophy of power.

In agreement with Hegel, it asserts: “The real being of man, in the first instance, is his own action.” In this belief he joins the German thinker who reversed the famous phrase, “In the beginning there was the Word”-in which the Word signifies spirit, for it is through the word that the spirit expresses itself-and declared “In the beginning there was the Act.”[10]

This is one of the principles of the materialistic philosophy of Marxism. This principle is known as “praxis” in the Marxist termino-logy, and is borrowed by Marx from his materialist predecessor, Feuer-bach, and his another master, Hegel.

Opposed to this principle is the principle of the philosophy of ontological realism [idealism] that believes in the priority of thought over action and reciprocal interaction of thought and action. In this philosophy, thought is the essence of man (e.g. the self's `knowledge by presence' of itself).

Man has a reciprocal relation with action and work: he creates work and his work in turn moulds him. Man, through his action upon the external world, acquires the data of his knowledge from the external world; until the mind becomes enriched with these primary data, it remains incapable of any intelligent activity.

After collecting this data, the mind reciprocally exercises its powers on the data in various fashions, as by generalization, abstraction, and inference (ratiocination). In this way, it prepares the grounds for the correct understanding of objects.

Understanding is not merely the reflection of external matter in the mind. It is only after the reflection of external matter is transformed inside the mind through a series of mental processes, which originate in the nonmaterial substance of the soul, that understanding becomes possible.

Hence, action is the origin of thought and thought is the origin of action. Action is the test of thought and at the same time thought is the test of action.

This is not a vicious circle. Man's nobility lies in his wisdom, faith, and dignity, and in turn his work is valuable because through it he acquires these

virtues. Man is the creator of his work, and, at the same time, he is also its product. This is the distinguishing characteristic of man, which is not found in any other being, and which is derived from a mode of Divine creation special to his species. [11]

Mans' creativity in relation to work is inventive and positive, while work's formative power in relation to man is only quantitative. It means that man actually creates his own work, but work does not really create a man. It is work, exercise, and repetitive practice, which provide the grounds for the making of man from within. Whenever there is a reciprocal relationship between two things which is inventive and positive from one side and quantitative and numerical from the other, the former is prior to the latter.

Hence man, whose essence is consciousness (`knowledge by presence' of his own self), has reciprocal relationship with work. Man creates work and work moulds man. Considering the fact that man is the necessary creative cause of work and work is merely a potential or quantitative cause of man, it may be said that man is prior to work, and work is not prior to him.

4. Priority o f the Social Existence o f Man Over His Individual Existence, or the Principle of Priority of Sociology Over Psychology

From the biological point of view, man is the most perfect of all animals. He has a kind of capacity for self-improvement which is specific to his kind. Man is endowed with a specific personality whose dimen-sions form his human Dasein (existence).

As a result of continued experiences and learning, the philosophical and intellectual dimension of man's existence is shaped. And due to the influence of some other factors his existence gains another dimension which is the ethical dimension. It is this dimension which is the source of all values, and basis of the entire moral `musts' and `must nots'.

The artistic and religious dimensions are also evolved in a similar manner. Man himself styles a system of intellectual principles which serve as the basis of his thinking within the framework of his philosophical and intellectual dimensions. In the course of his judgments, he arrives at a set of absolute and semi--absolute (comparatively relative) values in the moral and social spheres of life. All these dimensions combined together constitute human existence.

Human dimensions are entirely effects of social factors. At the time of birth, man is devoid of all these dimensions; he is actually like a raw material ready to acquire any form, ideological or emotional, depending upon the factors that exercise influence upon him. He is like an empty pot that has to be filled from outside, like a blank recording tape on which any sound can be recorded. Whatever is recorded on it is retrievable.

To sum up, the actual maker of human personality, and whatever that transforms man from a `thing' into a `person,' is nothing but the external social factors, which combined together constitute that which is called social process. Man in himself is purely a `thing;' which is transformed into a `person' as a result of the impact of social factors. P. Royan in his Historical Materialism quotes from page 42 of Plekhanov's Fundamental Problems of Marxism:

The characteristics of a social system are determined by the current level of development of the means of production of society. It means that when the stage of development of the means of production is determined, the charac-teristics of the social order and the psychology (of the people) related to it, and all the other corresponding relations within the system, on the one hand, and the ideas and the pace of progress, on the other; are also (of their own accord) determined.

In the same book, it is further stated that:

When psychology, through the means of production, is determined, ideology too, which is deeply rooted in the psychology of the people, is also conse-quently determined. But as the ideology at a particular historical stage is the product of social requirements, and as it always continues to protect the interests of the ruling class, it necessarily strengthens and perfects the existing social structure.

Hence the social structure in class-societies, which comes into existence for protecting the ruling class and propagating its ideology, is in reality the result of the social order and its requirements, and, in the last analysis, is the product of the character of the modes and the means of production.

For instance, the church and the mosque are for preaching of the religious beliefs, which in all the religions are based upon the faith in the final judgment or resurrection. The belief in resurrection is the logical outcome of the particular social order that is based upon the division of society into classes, which in its turn is the product of a particular stage of development of the means of production. Hence, belief in resurrection is the product of the means of production (at a particular stage of social development).

In contrast to this principle is another anthropological principle which is based upon the view that the foundation of human persona-lity, from which man's intellect and higher ideals arise, is itself inherent in human nature, ingrained in him by the agents which are responsible for his creation. It is correct that man, contrary to the well--known theory of Plato, is not born with a ready-made and finished per-sonality, but the real foundation of his personality is inborn, not acquired from the society.

If we want to interpret this idea in philoso-phical terms, we shall have to say that the real source of the human dimensions of man's existence-including the moral, religious, philoso-phical, artistic, scientific, literary, and emotional dimensions- have their origin in his rational self, which is man's distinguishing characteristic, and is bestowed upon him by the process of creation itself. Society fosters man, nurtures him, or distorts him according to his individual aptitudes. At first the rational self is potential, and then it gradually attains actuality.

In this way, man, according to the basic principles of thought, and also according to the principle governing his material and intellectual inclinations and aptitudes, is like all the other living beings, whose all faculties are potential in the beginning, and as a result of a series of mutational movements (harakat jawhariyyah) gradually actualize, develop, and attain perfection.

Man, under the influence of external factors, nourishes and cultivates his innate personality and attains perfection, or sometimes he deviates from the normal course and distorts it. This is the same principle which in Islamic writings is called the “principle of nature,” and is regarded as the mother principle in Islamic teachings.

On the basis of the principle of nature, human psychology is prior to human sociology. Sociology itself originates in human psychology. According to this principle of nature, although at the time of birth man possesses neither perception nor imagination, neither the power of judgment nor human aptitudes; he however is born with some existential dimensions besides his animal dimensions.

It is because of the same dimensions that he gradually evolves a sequence of abstract ideas and judgments (in philosophical and logical terms, the `secondary concepts') which form the real foundation of human thought, and without which any kind of logical reasoning is impossible. The same dimensions develop a series of sublime aspirations in man, and are considered to. be the foundation of human personality.

According to the theory of priority of human sociology over human psychology, man is merely a passive receiver, not an active seeker. He is a raw material which is indifferent to any form given to him, a blank tape on which any song can be recorded. In it there is no kind of inherent movement towards any fixed preordained form.

Whatever form is given to it is accepted without causing any distortion; because it neither has any form of its own, nor is any form alien to it. The tape does not require any particular song, because of its ability to receive any song without being alienated or estranged from its own essence or nature. The relation of this raw material to all forms, the relation of the tape to all songs, and the relation of the pot to whatever fills it, are similar and of the same kind.

But according to the principle of nature and the principle of prio-rity of human psychology over human sociology, although in the begin-ning man lacks actual understanding and actual inclinations, from within he moves in a dynamic way towards a series of primary judgments, which are called a priori or primary principles. He also moves towards a series of higher, sublime values which constitute his ideals of humanity.

After that a set of simple ideas, which are the primary elements of thought (and are called in philosophical term `primary concepts'), enters into his mind from outside; those principles emerge in the form of a system of theoretical or practical judgments, and the innate human inclinations gradually assume definite form in the course of time.

According to the first theory, man, under the existing conditions, believes for example, that the arithmetical formula, 2 x 2 = 4, as being absolutely true for all times and places. But actually this belief is a product of specific conditions; which means that it is due to the prevailing conditions which make it true, and it is just possible that under different conditions and a different environment the judgment would be quite different, such as 2 x 2 = 26.

But according to the second theory, although the external conditions help man to arrive at the idea of numbers 2, 4, 8, 10 and so on, but the calculations like 2 x 2 = 4 or 5 x 5 = 25 are essential pro-ducts of the human mind, and it is impossible for them to have different forms: Similarly the perfectionist tendencies of human nature are also inseparably essential characteristics of man's mind or soul. [12]

5. Priority of Material Aspect of Society over its Intellectual Aspect

Society is comprised of different strata, classes, and structures: economic, cultural, administrative, political, religious, legal, etc. From this angle, a society seems to be quite similar to a complete house where a family dwells and which consists of a drawing room, bedroom, kitchen, toilet etc.

One of the different social structures is that which serves the purpose of the base or the foundation of the whole structure, upon which stands the system and the superstructure. If it is disturbed or collapses, the whole structure is necessarily bound to fall. It is the economic structure of the society. The social structure of the society consists of whatsoever is related with its system of material produc-tion, such as tools and means of production, sources and relations of production.

Tools of production, which comprise the most important part of the social structure, are themselves always changing and developing. Every stage in the development of the tools of production, necessitates a specific system of relations of production which negates all that existed prior to it in the society.

The type of relations of production existing in a society depends upon particular laws and conditions concerning the institution of ownership, which really means the laws and conditions that govern the members of society and their conventional relationship with the sum. total of the product of society. With inevitable changes in the relations of production, the basis of all legal, intellectual, moral, religious, philosophical, and scientific principles is bound to change. In one sentence: economy is the foundation of society.

In the book Marx and Marxism, a passage from Marx's preface to his work The Critique of Political Economy is quoted:

In the social production of their life, men enter into specific relations that are indispensible and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. [13]

In the same book Marx's letter to Annenkov is also quoted:

Assume a particular state of development in the productive facilities of man and you will get a corresponding form of commerce and consumption.

Assume particular degrees of development of production, commerce, and consumption and you will have a corresponding organization of the family, or orders or of classes, in a word a corresponding civil society. [14]

Peter explains Marx's view in the following words:

In this fashion Marx has compared the society to a building, the base and foundation of which are the economic institutions, whose superstructure (the building itself) is comprised of political, religious, and legal patterns, customs and norms.

As in the case of a building, it depends upon the position of its base and foundation, the economic forms (relations of production) and technical modes are also dependent upon and associated with the modes of thinking, the political system and the customs, and each of them is subject to economic conditions. [15]

The same book quotes from Lenin's Marx-Engels Marxism a passage reproduced from the third volume of The Capital:

The mode of production manifests itself in the human activity in relation to nature and, followini that, in social conditions and intellectual patterns resulting from them. [16]

The same book quotes further from the Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:

My investigations led to the result that the legal relations as well as forms of the state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called-general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life ....the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy. [17]

Marx, in his book The Poverty of Philosophy, has written:

Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces, men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand mill gives you a society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, a society with the industrial capitalist. [18]

The theory of the primacy of material structure of society in relation to other social formations corresponds to the theory of priority of action over thought. The theory of priority of action over thought is applicable to the individual level, and the theory of priority of material aspect over other social aspects is actually based upon the theory of priority of action over thought but at the level of society.

Since the advocates of this view also advocate the theory of priority of human sociology over human psychology, hence the priority of individual action over individual thought is a form and result of the theory of priority of material aspect over other social aspects.

Contrarily, if human sociology is considered to be prior to human psychology, the priority of material aspect of society over its other aspects would be considered as the effect and result of the priority of individual action over individual thought.

The material aspect of society, which may be also termed as the economic structure or economic base, consists of two constituents: firstly,

the tools of production, which are the product of man's relation with nature; and, secondly, the economic relations of the members of society on the grounds of distribution of wealth, which are sometimes termed as the “relations of production.” Often both of them are referred to as “the means of production” or “the mode of produc-tion.” [19]

It should be noted that these terms used by the founders of historical materialism are not free from ambiguity, and are not well- defined and specific.[20] When they say that economy is the base and the material aspect of society is prior to other social aspects, they mean the whole system of production, but generally refer to the-tools of production and relations of production.

Special attention should be paid to an important point fully expli-cit in the writings of the founders of historical materialism that the base itself is two-tiered; a part of it acts as the base for the other part, which is built upon it. The basis, the real foundation at the bottom of the structure consists of the tools of production, i.e. the physical labour materialized. It is the physical labour which creates and posits particular economic relations according to the distribution of wealth.

These relations, which reflect the degree of the development of the tools of production, are not only in harmony with the tools of production, but are also considered to be their incentive and motivating force. It means that the specific economic relations in a society are the means of deriving the greatest benefit from the tools of production. They are like a garment tailored to fit the body, i.e. the means of production.

But the tools of production in themselves are subject to development. Any change in the tools of production can disturb the harmony between the two constituent parts of the system of production. The productive and economic relations, i.e. those laws which were evolved to suit the earlier tools of production, become outdated in the same manner as a child's dress does not fit the fully grown-up man, and hinders his free movement.

Similarly the primitive tools do not suit a more developed society and obstruct its growth by creating contradiction between the two tiers of production structure. The new tools of production are inevitably estab-lished and the base, i.e. the economic structure of society, is totally transformed and, in consequence of this change, the legal, moral, philosophical, and religious superstructure is also overthrown.

Keeping in mind the primacy of collective labour, i.e. labour materialized which is represented by the tools of production, and also considering the fact that Marx is one of those sociologists who regard sociology as being prior to psychology, who also considers man qua man as a social being or in his own words “sui generic”, the philo-sophical role of labour according to Marxism-which is the essence of the Marxist philosophy and to which little attention has been paid- becomes clear.

Marx gives the same importance to human labour in the context of human existence that Descartes gives to the rational being of man, Bergson to the dynamic aspect of human existence, and Jean Paul Sartre to man's feeling of guilt.

Descartes says, “I think, therefore I am” (Cogito ergo sum). Bergson says, “I have continuity, therefore I exist.” Sartre says, “I feel-guilty, therefore I exist.” Marx would have said, “I work, therefore I exist.”

Apart from these diverse modes of existence (thought, continuity, guilt etc.), none of these thinkers tries to posit human existence or `ego' in absolute terms. Some of them even maintain that man's existence cannot be conceived beyond and apart from one of these specific modes. Moreover, everyone of them wants to define man's essence and reality of human existence in these terms only.

For instance, Descartes intends to say, “My existence is synonymous with the existence of my thought; eliminate thought, and I am nothing.”

Bergson intends to say, “Human existence is identical with continuity and time (duration).”

Sartre also intends to say that “man's essence and actuality of his existence lies in the sense of guilt; take away guilt from human nature, and man is nothing.”

Marx also in his turn intends to say, “The whole of man's existence and his actual being is work. Work is the essence of humanity; I labour, there-fore I am. It is not in this sense that work is the proof of the existence of my self, but in the sense that work itself is identical with the existence of my self; work is my actual existence.”

Marx says, “For a socialist person the entire so-called history of the world is nothing but begetting of man through human labour.”[21] He distinguishes human consciousness from man's real existence, and says, “It is not the consciousness of man that determines his being, but his social being that determines his consciousness. “‘[22]

He further says that the premises with which we start are not self-willed or absolute, but are derived from real individuals, their actions, and from material conditions of existence. He explains the term “real individual” in the following words: “But the real individuals act not according to the whims which cross their imagination... but according to what they materially produce and make; i.e. they act on the basis of definite material conditions and certain limitations- conditions which are independent of their will.” [23]

Engels says: “Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert... but it is infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this is true to such an extent that, in a way, we should say that it is labour which has created man himself.”[24] All these extracts from the writings of the founders of Marxism indicate their emphasis on the role of labour.

However, Marx and Engels have borrowed this idea regarding the role of labour from Hegel, who said, “The real being of man, in the first instance, is his action.” [25]

Hence, according to Marxism, existence of man is primarily social and not individual. Secondly, the social existence of man is synony-mous with his materialized labour, i.e. collective labour. All individual modes like feelings and emotions, or all social modes such as morality, philosophy, art,

religion etc. are only expressions and manifestations of man's real being; they are not identical with his being itself:

According-ly, the actual evolution of man is identical with the development of collective labour. But intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development or evolution of the social system is only a manifestation and reflec-tion of the real development and not the development itself. The mater-ial development of a society is the criterion of its intellectual develop-ment.

As action is the criterion for judging thought, truth or falsity of an idea is also judged through action and not by intellectual or logical standards. In the same way, the measure of intellectual development also is material development.

Hence, if the question arises as to which school of philosophy, morality, religion or art is more progressive, the intellectual and logical standards cannot provide the answer to this question. The only criterion should be to see what are the conditions of which that particular school of thought is the product and manifesta-tion, and at which stage of development of social labour or tools of production it has emerged.

This type of thinking is, of course, very strange to people like us who consider the real existence of man as his own `self' and this `self,' too, an immaterial substance and a product of mutational movements of nature and not the product of society. But for one like Marx, who thinks in material terms and does not believe in the immaterial sub-stance, is bound to interpret the essence of man and his a[6]tuality from a biological point of view, and say that the essence of man is identical with the physical constitution of his body, as the ancient materialists, like the materialists of the eighteenth century, believed. But Marx has rejected the mechanistic view of life and has claimed that the being of man is grounded in society not in nature. Whatever has been formed by nature is the potential human being, not the actual one.

Furthermore, either Marx should regard thought as the essence of humanity, and work as the manifestation and expression of thought or, on the con-trary; he should consider labour as the essence of humanity and thought as the manifestation and expression of labour.

Marx, being a materialist, not only does approve of the primacy of matter in the individual, but also rejects the idea of any supra material essence besides the individual's material existence. In the context of society and history also, he accedes to the priority of matter. As a result he has to adopt the second alternative.

Here a basic difference between the point of view of Marx and that of other materialists concerning the nature of history comes to light. Every materialist, since he considers man and other manifesta-tions of his existence as material, inevitably tends to regard history also as materialistic. But what Marx says is more than this. Marx tries to say that history is essentially economic in character, and in economics, too, the economic relations of production occupy the most important place.

Since he considers the economic and production relations, i.e. the relation of workers with the products of their labour, as essential and

necessary, derived from the stage of development of the tools of pro-duction, Marx's viewpoint is- that history is determined by the tools or instruments of production.

Merely to say that history is materialistic in nature, or to say that history is economic in nature, is not enough to define the Marxian viewpoint. We should notice that according to Marx the essence and nature of history is "instrumentalist." I, in some of my works,[26] have termed Marx's historical materialism as an "instru-mentalist theory," which is opposed to my own "humanistic theory" of history.

Actually, the manner in which Marx is absorbed in his philosophy of labour and conceives the idea of `social labour,' shows that human beings as he conceives them are not the same as those who walk in the streets and think and resolve, but as if they are, in fact, like tools and machines in factories. Human beings who walk, talk, and think are seen as images of the `real' human beings conceived by Marx.

Marx's view of social labour and tools of production seems to advance a view according to which man is a being who acts blindly and mechanically without any resolution and will. He is merely a shadow of man, not man himself, whose development and progress is determined strictly externally and who has no will or purpose of his own, and is forced to follow a predetermined path blindly.

It may be said that whatever Marx has said regarding the priority of collective labour over the conscious mind and human will sounds to be quite similar to the views expressed by some of the religious thinkers about the unconscious functionings of human organs, such as the functioning of digestive system, heart, liver etc., which are consi-dered to operate under the influence of a hidden single will.

According to these thinkers, desires, wishes, 'oughts' and `ought nots,' and consequently the matters which are related to the practical aspect of the mind, i.e. the lower, functional, and physiological sides of the human self, which appear on the surface of the conscious mind and without its knowing their origin, are reflections of a series of compulsive natural needs originating from the subconscious. It is similar to what has been termed by Freud as the subconscious or the unconscious, which dominates the conscious mind.

The views of those ancient thinkers and that of Freud, however, relate to a part of the conscious mind and to the influence of a con-cealed consciousness. Besides, whatever they talk about is not external to human existence; but what Marx says is external to human existence.

Careful observation shows that Marx's theory is quite astonishing from the philosophical point of view.

Marx compares his own discovery with the well-known biological discovery of Darwin. Darwin has proved that a process quite external to the animal's will and consciousness gradually and unconsciously causes biological changes in the course of time. Marx also claims that a blind process (identical with the real existence of man) gradually and unconsciously causes the formation of the social structure, i.e. all the things

named by Marx as superstructure, and even a part of the base also, i.e. the socio-economic relations.

He says, “Darwin has called the attention of scientists towards the history of natural selection, the formation of organs in plants and animals corresponding to the means of production necessary for their survival. Isn't the history of genera-tion and formation of organs producing the social human being, i.e. the material basis of all types of social organizations, worthy of such a treatment? ...Natural selection lays bare the modes of human action vis-à-vis nature; the mode of production lays bare man's material exis-tence, and as a result, the source of social relations, thought, and intellectual products that spring from it.” [27]

It is quite obvious from all that we have said about the theory of historical materialism that it is based on several other theories, some of which are psychological and others are sociological, some philosophical and others anthropological.

Conclusions

The theory of historical materialism itself leads to a series of conclusions which are influential in practical social strategy. Historical materialism is not merely a theoretical and intellectual approach with-out relevance to social behaviour and social choice. Now we have to see what sort of conclusions can be drawn from it.

1. The first conclusion is related to the problem of study of society and history

On the basis of historical materialism, the best and the most reliable way to study and analyse historical and social events is to investigate their economic basis. Without studying the economic foundation of historical events, their correct understanding is impos-sible; because it is presumed that all social changes are materialistic in essence, even-though they may appear to have an independent cultural, religious, or moral essence.

It means that all these changes are reflec-tions of the economic and material conditions of society, being their effects. Ancient thinkers also claimed that knowledge of objects by means of identification of their causes is the most reliable and the best way of understanding them.

Hence, if we assume that the root cause of all social changes is the economic structure of society, the best way of studying history is socio-economic analysis. In other words, as the cause has priority over its effects, at the stage of study, also, priority lies with it. Hence, the priority of economic base exists not only at the level of external reality, but it is also to be observed at the level of intellectual inquiry and study.

In the book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, this problem has been discussed as follows:

For analysing social revolutions, one must not judge social conflicts in political, legal, or ideological terms; on the contrary, they are to be interpreted in terms of the contradiction between the productive forces and relations of production. Marx has seriously warned us of the dangers of such a judgment, firstly because such a judgment is not realistic, for it replaces

the cause, which economic changes and contradictions are, by the effect, i.e. political, legal, and ideological forms, which are the effects.

Secondly, such an interpretation is superficial; as instead of probing deeply into the real causes, it only touches upon the surface, and what is apparent reality is considered to be sufficient for explanation. Thirdly, it is illusory; because the superstruc-tures, which are on the whole ideological, are nothing but inaccurate images of the reality. Depending on inaccurate images instead of a realistic analysis of the problem under study, will no doubt lead us into confusion and error. [28]

Here the author quotes from the selected works of Marx and Engels:

As in the case of an individual mere self-introspection does not help us to make any judgement, in the same way, during the period of disturbance and chaos, the ideas of that period should not be treated as helpful for judging its character. [29]

Marx makes an attempt to reject the role of consciousness, thought, and innovation, which is generally considered to be a basic agent of development. For instance, Saint Simon, from whom Marx has borrowed a number of ideas, writing about the role of creativity in the process of evolution, says:

Societies are governed by two moral forces which are equally strong and operate alternately. One is the force of habit or custom, and the other is inclination towards innovation and creativity. After some time customs necessarily become evil ....At such times, the need for something new begins to be felt. It is this need which really constitutes the revolutionary situation. [30]

Proudhon, another of Marx's teachers, says about the role of ideas and beliefs in the evolution of societies:

Political forms of nations have been the manifestations of their beliefs. Movement of the forms, their transformation and annihilation are the tests which reveal the value of the underlying ideas, through which an absolute and unchangeable reality is revealed to us gradually. But we see that all political institutions necessarily seek adjustment with the existing social conditions in order to be saved from inevitable death. [31]

Despite all this, Marx claims that every social revolution, more than anything else, is a socio-economic necessity. It is caused by the process of polarization of civil social structure, the forces of production and social relations.[32]

Marx tries to say that it is neither inventiveness and creativity nor revolutionary ideas and beliefs that are instrumental in the process of social change, but it is socio-economic necessity that makes men develop and embrace new revolutionary beliefs and ideologies. Hence if we try to apply the conclusions of historical materialism for analys-ing certain historical events such as the wars of Persia and Greece, or the Crusades, or the Islamic conquests, or the Renaissance in the West, or the constitutional movement in Iran, it would be a mistake to study and evaluate them from the viewpoint of superficial forms of these events, which are occasionally political, religious, or cultural.

It would not be right to accept even the views of the revolutionaries, who might have regarded those movements as religious, cultural, or political as a -criterion. We should concentrate our attention on the real substance of those movements, which is economic and material in essence, in order to arrive at correct conclusions.

Nowadays we see that the contemporary Marxists, while trying to explain any historical movement, snatch some rudimentary facts from here and there, and without having any authentic and conclusive infor-mation about it discuss the economic conditions of the past events and movements.

2. The law governing history is deterministic, inviolable, and external to human will

In previous chapters, I have already discussed whether a series of binding causal laws rules history. I have also explained that some people in the name of accidents, and others on account of the freedom of human will, have rejected the law of causation and consequently nega-ted the existence of certain necessary permanent laws for society and history.

But I have proved that such a theory is baseless. The law of causation, and consequently the necessary relation between cause and effect, governs history in the same manner as it governs other natural phenomena.

In addition to it I have also proved that society and history have an organic unity and objective existence, and, therefore, possess a specific nature, whose laws are necessary and universal. Hence accord-ing to the previous statement, a series of general and necessary laws govern history and society. We shall term this type of necessity as `philosophical necessity.' This necessity is responsible for directing the course of history according to a series of definite and necessary laws.

But the Marxist notion of historical determinism means economic determinism. It is a. unique interpretation of philosophical necessity. This theory synthesizes two different theories. The first one is the conception of philosophical necessity, which holds that no accident can occur without a cause. Occurrence of every historical phenomenon is made inevitable and certain due to presence of particular causes respon-sible for bringing it into existence. No accident can occur in absence of its causes.

The second theory is that of the primacy of material founda-tion of society as against other foundations. This theory has already been discussed earlier. The necessary corollary of these theories is materialistic determinism of history, i.e. dependence of the superstruc-ture on the base is necessary and inevitable. Any change in the base necessarily brings about change in the superstructure. Without a change in the base, any change in the superstructure is absolutely impossible.

That which, according to the Marxist claim, makes Marxist socialism `scientific,' and makes it assume the garb of a natural law like other natural laws, is the very principle of historical determinism. According to this principle the tools of production, which are the most fundamental part of the economic structure, continue to develop according to a system of natural laws.

Their development is similar to the evolution of animals and plants which in the course of several hundred million years continued their gradual

development, attaining new forms at every stage. As changes in species and evolution in animals and plants are independent of their own will and desire, the process of development and evolution of the tools of production also takes place automatically.

In the course of their gradual development, the tools of produc-tion pass through certain stages. At every stage they cause irresistible transformation in all social modes, and this process is irresistible. Before it reaches a specific stage of development, the possibility of initiative changes in the superstructure of the society does not exist.

The socialists, and in general the advocates of a just social order, who do not pay much attention to the possibilities realized through the development of the tools of production, and merely cherish the desire for social justice and socialism on sentimental grounds, cannot achieve anything; they waste their time and energy in futile daydreaming. Karl Marx, in his preface to the first German edition of The Capital, says:

The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future.[33]... And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement ultimately ...it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enact-ments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal develop-ment. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs.

Marx himself has expounded certain points in the latter part of his statement, which either have been ignored or underestimated. He is actually trying to answer a possible question and objection.

Someone might have said: “The step-by-step development of society follows irresistibly the orderly step-by-step development in nature only, as long as man does not understand this process and fails to discover it. But as soon as man understands it, it comes under his control and domination. It is said that as long as man does not understand nature, it dominates him, but as soon as he understands it, nature becomes his obedient servant. For example, a disease remains uncured as long as its causes and cures are unknown, but as soon as it is understood, it becomes curable and is eradicated. In the same manner cyclones and other natural calamities may be prevented.”

To elaborate the above-quoted statement, what 'Marx wants to say is this: The orderly step by step movement of society is a kind of organic change. It is the type of automatic internal movement of things, like the growth of animals and plants.

It is a kind of motion which is not mechanical. But changes brought about in things by means of external factors, like all technical and industrial changes, and other- changes imposed on nature by applying external pressures, such as killing of insects by insecticides or elimination of bacteria by means of drugs, are mechanistic. When the knowledge of natural laws is employed by man to subjugate nature, the relation between man and nature is mechanical.

In the case of organic transformations and internal and essential movements of things, the utmost role that human knowledge and

consciousness can play is to act in accordance with them, and to apply his knowledge for extracting the greatest benefit from them.

Man, by discovering the laws governing the growth and evolution of plants and animals-and of these are the laws governing the growth of embryo inside the animal's womb-also discovers the necessity and unchangeability of those irresistible laws.

Marx means to say that, social development of man, which is subject to development in the tools of production, is a kind of organic, autogenetic, essential, and spontaneous evolution from within, that cannot be controlled by knowledge or consciousness. Man is compelled to pass through the specific stages of a determined social evolution, just as an embryo has to undergo a definite course of development inside the womb. Any idea of changing that course is nothing but futile.

It is not possible for society to reach the highest stage without passing through certain intermediate stages. It is also impossible for a society to reach the highest stage by adopting a course different from the paths determined by history.

The Marxist conception of social evolution as a spontaneous, un-conscious, or involuntary, natural, and necessary process resembles the Socratic conception of human mind, according to which ideas are inborn. Socrates used the dialectical method in his teachings. He believed that if the questions were asked step-by-step in a systematic way with an accurate knowledge of the workings of the mind, it finds the answers automatically and naturally without any external guidance.

Socrates was the son of a midwife. He used to say that he performed the same duty with minds as his mother performed in regard to preg-nant women. A midwife does not give birth to a child. It is nature which makes mother deliver the child at a certain time. In spite of this she needs the services of the midwife, who takes care that any untoward incident does not happen which may endanger the life of the mother or the child.

From the Marxist point of view, though the knowledge of the laws of sociology and philosophy of history does not cause a social change, yet the knowledge of sociology and philosophy of history is valuable. And scientific socialism is nothing but the discovery of these laws. The least service it can render is to liberate minds from the influence of utopian socialism and sentimental advocacy of justice.

The laws of dynamics, on the contrary, although they are unchangeable and permanent, their knowledge offers an advantage, i.e. they are useful in predicting the future course. In the light of scientific sociology and scientific socialism the pattern of every society can be investigated. We can discover its present stage of development and predict its future course.

Consequently, one can know in which stage of embryonic development is the baby of socialism in the womb of society. At every stage one must expect only what it is right to expect of that stage, avoiding all undue expectations. A society which is still in the stage of feudalism should not be expected to enter into the phase of socialism; because, a four-month-old embryo cannot be expected to be born immediately as a fully developed baby.

Marxism makes an attempt to identify the natural-dynamic stages of society, and discover such inviolable laws of evolution of societies which are applicable to the transition of society from one epoch to another.

According to Marxism, all societies have to pass through four phases of development in order to reach the stage of socialism, viz. the period of primitive communism, the period of slavery, the period of capitalism, and the period of socialism. Sometimes instead of four periods five, six, or even seven, periods are enumerated, which means that the periods of slavery, capitalism, and socialism may be further divided into two sub-periods.

3. Each historical period is quite different from the other period in character and nature

As the process of evolution changes one species into another, in case of historical epochs the same thing happens. Every period of history has its own specific laws; the laws belonging to an earlier period or any of the latter periods can never be applied to a certain period of history.

Water, as long as it is water, follows the laws governing liquids; but when the same water is converted into steam, it does not follow those laws but becomes subject to the laws of gases.

Society also follows this principle; for example, as long as it is in the stage of feudalism it has to follow the laws peculiar to feudalism, but as soon as it leaves back that stage and reaches the stage of capitalism, any effort to retain the laws belonging to feudalism would be absurd.

Accordingly, a society cannot have any eternal and absolute laws. According to the theory of historical materialism and the doctrine that economy is the base, all the laws that are claimed to be `eternal' are actually dependent upon the base and so transient.

One of the basic differences between historical materialism and religion, specially Islam, is that religion firmly believes in the eternity of a set of (Divine) laws. The book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, quotes from an appendix to the second edition of The Capital:

Every period of history has laws of its own... accordingly as life passes from one stage to another stage, it evolves and is governed by a new set of laws. Economic life, in the course of its historical development, brings forth a phenomenon that we come across in various branches of biology... social organisms are distinguished from one another in the same way as animal and plant organisms are differentiated. [34]

4. From the dawn of history, it is development in the tools of production that is responsible for giving rise to private ownership and dividing society into the two classes of the exploiters and the exploited. These two main classes have represented the two basic poles of society from the beginning of history to the present day.

There has been, and always there shall be, a struggle and antagonism between these two poles of society. But bipolarization of society does not mean that all groups are either exploiters or exploited. Possibly there may be certain groups who are neither exploiters nor exploited. What is meant is that the important groups that influence the fate of society are these two groups which form the two basic poles of society. Other groups are dependent on one of these two main groups.

In Revisionism from Marx to Mao, the author writes:

We find two different patterns of division of society according to classes and their conflicts; according to Marx and Engels: one is bipolar, and the other is multipolar. Definition of class also differs in both the patterns.[35] In the first pattern it is an imaginary class, while in the other it is a real class. The rules regarding the divisions of classes are also different. Engels, in his preface to The Peasants' War in Germany tries to reconcile these two patterns by evolving a uniform standard for class division. He distinguishes various classes in society, and, within each class, he differentiates various subgroups. But according to his belief, there are only two classes who accomplish a definite historic mission: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; because they form the really opposite poles of society.[36]

According to the philosophy of Marxism, as it is impossible for the superstructure of a society to precede its infrastructure, similarly it is also impossible for society to be considered as unified whole at the level of superstructure despite its being divided at the level of the base (social and economic relations, and property relations) into two poles of the exploiters and the exploited. Social consciousness. itself is also, in its turn, to be analysed into two types, i.e. the consciousness of the exploiters and the consciousness of the exploited.

Thus two types of world outlooks, two ideologies, two moral systems, and two types of philosophy emerge in society. Social and economic conditions of each class inspire a specific type of thinking, a specific social point of view, a particular taste, and a particular social attitude and approach in each class.

It is not possible that a class's consciousness, taste, and manner of thinking should precede its economic situation. The only things that are not bipolar and which are specific to the class of exploiters are religion and state.

Religion and state are invented by the exploiting class for the surrender and subjugation of the exploited. As the exploiting class is the owner of all material resources of society, they impose their own culture and their religion on the oppressed.

In this manner the culture of the ruling class, i.e. the world outlook of the ruling class, their ideology, their morality, their tastes, their sensibility, and more than everything, the religion of the rulers, is predominant; and the culture belonging to the oppressed remains always dominated like themselves, obstructing their progress. In German Ideology Marx says:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal ....

The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas, hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance..

The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. In so far, as they rule as a class and

determine the extent and compass of an historical epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range; hence among other things they rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of epoch.[37]

The class of the rulers and exploiters is by nature reactionary, conservative, traditionalist and obscurantist. Its culture, which is imposed by force is also reactionary, traditionalist, and obscurantist. But the oppressed and the victimized class is by nature revolutionary, anti-traditionalist, progressive, and futurist.

Their culture, which is oppressed like them, is a revolutionary, rebellious, and progressive culture. The condition of being- oppressed is the essential condition for being revolutionary, i.e. this is the only class which is capable of being revolutionary.

In the book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, after the passage which I have quoted from Engel's prefatory note to The Peasants' War in Germany is written:

One year after the publication of this prefatory note, (prefatory note to ThePeasants' War in Germany) the Congress of the German Socialists has written in its Gotha Program that all classes form a reactionary front against the labour class.

Marx severely criticized this statement. But if we are logical, we should admit the fact that since these miserable socialists could not possibly differentiate between his bipolar or multipolar patterns after what Marx had written in the Manifesto.

In the Manifesto (Manifesto of the Communist Party), Marx presents the class conflicts of those days as the war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He writes: “Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a revolutionary class.”[38]

In some of his remarks, Marx has himself said that the only class that fulfils all conditions and qualifications of being a revolutionary class is the proletariat, and these conditions mean:

1. The condition of being oppressed; they should be productive also.

2. The condition of being propertyless (the peasants also fulfil this and the first condition).

3. Organisation, which requires centralization and solidarity (the class of proletariat, who work together inside the factories, alone fulfil this condition, while peasants, who work on fields scattered in different lands, do not).

Regarding the second characteristic Marx says: “The worker is free in two ways: free to sell his labour, and free of every kind of property.” And regarding the third characteristic he says in the Manifesto, “With the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number, but it also becomes concentrated in greater masses. Its power increases, and it becomes conscious of that power.” [39]

The above-mentioned doctrine can be termed as `the doctrine of correspondence between the ideological foundation and the class and social foundation.' On the basis of this doctrine, every class produces a certain type

of thought, ideas, morality, philosophy, art, and poetry which fulfil the requirements of its life-style, economic conditions and interests. We can also name it `the doctrine of correspondence between the source of every thought and its direction.'

It means that all types of thought and all kinds of moral and religious systems originating from a particular class will suit the interests of that class only. It is not possible that a system of thought originating from a certain class should aim to serve the interests of the other class, or a system of thought evolved by a particular class may serve the interests of humani-ty without having a particular class orientation.

Thought can become humanistic and can transcend the class only when the development in the tools of production reaches a stage which affirms the abolition of all classes. It means that by negating class contradictions, ideological contradictions are also negated, and by negating the basis of ideological contradictions, the contradictions between different currents of thought are also negated.

Marx, in some of his earlier works written in young age (Contribu-tion to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right), was more inter-ested in the political aspect of classes (the rulers and the ruled) than the economic aspect (exploitation and the exploited). He considered class conflicts as wars for independence and freedom from bondage. He suggested two stages of these wars: the first as the partial and political stage, and the second as the total and humanistic stage.

He stated that the proletarian revolution is the last stage of the revolution of the enslaved of history. A revolution is the basis of total emancipa-tion of man from all sorts and forms of domination and servitude. Marx has tried to solve the problem as to how a class transcends its class character and proceeds forward to attain a goal which is universal and human, and at the same time to reconcile this notion with the laws of historical materialism.

He explains that as subordination of this class is a fundamental fact, its revolution also is of basic significance. This class has not been subjected to any particular injustice, but the very essence of injustice itself is imposed upon it, thus stimulating it to aspire for the ideals of justice and human freedom.

This explanation, if poetic, is by no means scientific. What does Marx mean by the “essence of injustice” itself being imposed upon a class? Is it so that the exploiting class before assuming that role had to adopt this course according to a different logic and indulged in the acts of tyranny for the sake of tyranny, not for exploitation, and pursued the acts of injustice for the sake of injustice, not with the purpose of exploitation, as a consequence of which the proletariat reacted to obtain justice for itself? Moreover, the assumption that the exploiting class reaches this position during the period of capitalism, is quite con-trary to the doctrine of historical materialism, and a kind of idealism.

The doctrine of correspondence between the ideological and class bases requires that there should be correspondence between the source of a thought and its orientation. It also requires that there should be a relation between the inclination of an individual and the particular school of thought

which is the product of his own class; i.e. the natural propensity of every individual is towards the ideology which originates in his own class and is useful for the interests of his own class.

From the viewpoint of Marxist logic, this principle is of extra-ordinary sociological usefulness in understanding the nature of ideologies and the aspirations of social classes.

5. The fifth conclusion is about the limited role of ideology, guidance, propaganda, exhortation and other such things, as they are matters associated with the superstructure in directing the society or social classes. Ordinarily it is presumed that ideology, propaganda, logical argument, education and upbringing, indoctrination and exhortation are capable of moulding and changing human thinking in accordance with preferred ends.

Keeping in mind the fact that the consciousness of every individual and every group is the product of their social and class character and is necessarily bound to reflect it, it is also impossible for them to take a lead over or lag behind their class consciousness.

The notion that the superstructure, and various phenomena related to it, is a source of social change is an idealistic conception of society and history. It means that the movement of the forces of the intelligentsia, reformers and revolutionaries is self-propelling.

In fact, it is frustra-tion and deprivation of the class which from within inspires the intelli-gentsia and motivates the spirit of reform and revolution, not any external factors like education, training, etc., or at least it is the class character which is responsible for preparing ground for these matters automatically.

The maximum role of ideology, leadership, and other enlightening activities is only to the extent that they help in awakening the consciousness of contradiction between classes, giving rise to self-consciousness in the oppressed class; or it helps in transforming a `class--in-itself,' into a `class-for-itself;' i.e. a class unconscious of its class character into a class possessing class consciousness.

Hence the sole intellectual factor that can mobilize a particular .class in a class society is awakening of consciousness to its condition of being ex-ploited But other so-called universal humanitarian approaches such as love of justice and mankind cannot play any role in a class society divided into two groups of the exploiters and the exploited who are alienated from their own selves, and in which social consciousness has been split into two parts. It is true that with the development in the tools of production a proletarian government is established, abolishing class-distinctions, and man is restored to his original classless existence.

Human consciousness divided on the basis of ownership is again unified. At that time the approach of universal humanitarianism, reflecting the communistic pattern of ownership of the tools of-production, can play an effective role. Socialism, which is in fact a superstructure for a specific period of history, cannot be arbitrarily produced beforehand in any earlier period (as the Utopian Socialists desired.)

Also, in any particular historical epoch in which society is divided into two classes, the consciousness of a specific class can in no way be imposed on the other class, there is nothing like common human consciousness.

In class societies, therefore, any general and universal ideology without a class alignment cannot emerge. Every ideology that appears in class societies inevitably possesses a specific class character.

Even if such an impossibility should occur, it could not play any prac-tical role. Accordingly, all the claims of religion, or at least that which in the form of guidance, preaching, moral advice, and exhortation addresses the whole humanity in the name of universal justice and equality for all, if not entirely deceptive, should at least be considered utopian.

6. The other conclusion we should infer is that all revolutionary figures, leaders, guides, and heroes essentially arise from the exploited class.

After demonstrating that it is only the exploited class that has the aptitude for enlightenment, reform, and revolution-only the condition of being oppressed and exploited can produce this aptitude, and at the most the super-structural factors may be credited for awakening class antagonism and self-consciousness-it becomes obvious that those prominent individuals who come forward to make the ideas of enlightenment instrumental in awakening class consciousness should themselves be fellow sufferers belonging to the same class and sharing its class consciousness.

As it is historically impossible for a super--structural pattern to precede its base, and for a class to have a social consciousness that precedes its class character; in the same way it is not possible that a person as a `leader' may precede his class, demanding more than what is required by his own class. Similarly, it is also impossible for a person belonging to the exploiting class of society to stand against his own class in the interests of the exploited class.

In the book, Revisionism from Marx to Mao, the author says:

Another original contribution of The German Ideology is analysis of class

consciousness. Here Marx, contrary to his earlier works,[40] regards class consciousness as the product of the class itself; it does not come from without. The real consciousness is nothing but an ideology, because it is bound to give a generalized form to the interests of a particular class. But it does not exclude the fact that this consciousness, which is based upon the awareness of its own conditions, strengthens the interests of the class. In any case, the class cannot attain maturity without producing its specific class consciousness.

Marx's view affirms the division of labour within the working class itself, i.e. the intellectual work (the ideological work, leadership) and manual work. Some individuals become thinkers or ideologues of the class, while others rather passively accept and act upon the ideas and concepts provided for them. [41]

In the same book, while discussing Marx's philosophy with refe-rence to the Manifesto and Poverty of philosophy, the author says:

In this way, awakening class consciousness and organizing it in the form of a `class-for-itself' is the task of the proletariat and also the result of its

self-fuelled economic battle. This upheaval is neither brought about by any intellectual theory which is alien to the workers' movement, nor by any political party.

Marx condemns Utopian socialists who despite their prole-tarian inclination do not see the historical self-propulsion of the proletariat and their specific political movement ...and try to replace with their fancies the gradual and self-motivated organization of the proletariat into a class.[42]

This principle is particularly important for understanding the Marxist viewpoint about society and social inclinations, and the Marxist criteria for evaluating individuals, especially leaders and social reformers.

From whatever has been said above, it is obvious that Marx and- Engels did not believe in any independent groups of intellectuals free of and above classes. That is, there is no room in the principles of Marxism to allow for the existence of such a class of intellectuals. If Marx occa-sionally makes statements contrary to this, it is because he himself does not remain a Marxist.

And such occasions, as we shall discuss later, when Marx has contradicted himself, are not rare. Now, the question arises as to how Marx and Engels explain their own position with regard to intellectuals in the light of the principles of Marxism. None of them belonged to the proletariat class. Both of them were philosophers, not workers, yet they have produced the greatest theory of labour and working class.

Marx's answer to this question is interesting. In the book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, the author says:

Marx has spoken little about the intellectuals. He apparently does not regard them as a special stratum of society, but a part of certain other classes, particularly the bourgeoisie. In The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx considers academics, journalists, university teachers, and lawyers as the part of the bourgeois class, like priests and army men.

In the Manifesto, when he wants to mention the names of the theorists of the working class who by origin do not belong to it-like Engels and himself-he does not call them intellectuals, but regards them as `groups of people from the ruling class..., who have embedded themselves amongst the proletariat,' and `have brought many elements for the education and training of that class.[43]

Marx does not offer any explanation as to how he and Engels tumbled down from the skies of the ruling class to the depths of the subject class, and how they could manage to bring with them those precious gifts for the teaching and training of the downtrodden and the “dha matrabah” ‘The destitute’ as the Quran calls them (90:17).

In reality, whatever Marx and Engels could attain-and through them the lower and the downtrodden class of the proletariat could not be attained by Adam, the father of mankind, who according to the religious tradition, fell from heaven to earth. Adam could not bring such a gift along with him.

Marx does not explain as to how the ideology which can liberate the proletariat takes shape in the minds of the ruling class. In addition to this, he offers no explanation as to whether this descent or de-classing is especially reserved for only these two persons, or if it is possible for others too.

He also does not throw any light on the matter that if sometimes, though in exceptional cases, the doors of heaven are opened to earth, whether it is the `descent' alone that takes place and the members of the heavenly class come down to the level of the earthly class, or if it is possible the other way round too?

Is the `ascension' also sometimes possible in which the members of the downtrodden class attain the lofty heights of the ruling class? Perhaps, even if that were possible, they could hardly carry with them such gifts as may suit the heavenly ones.

Basically, it is meaningless to carry gifts from the earth to the heaven; but if one were blessed with the opportunity of ascension and were not merged into the heavenly class, he might return to earth, like Mr. Marx and Mr. Engels, with heavenly gifts for the earthly.

Notes

1. Andre Peter , op. cit., p. 39.

2. Ibid.

3. "Allamah Tabataba'i, Murtada Mutahhari, Usul-e falsafeh wa rawish-e riyalism, "Principles and Method of the Philosophy of Realism," vol. I and II. (Translator's note: The term "realism" is used by the author in the specific sense of epistemological realism not metaphorical realism.)

4. P. Royan, Historical Materialism, p. 37.

5. Ibn Sina, in part 8 of his al-'Isharat, has discussed this subject with great insight.

6. Murtada Mutahhari, Qiyam wa inqilab-a Mahdi, “The Uprising and Revolution of al-Mahdi.”

7. The following definition of the purpose and end of philosophy has been given

صَيْرورَةُ الإنْسانِ عالماً عَقْليَّاً مُضاهياً لِلْعالمِ العَيْنِيّ.

(The purpose of philosophy) is to transform man into a rational microcosm analogous to the external macrocosm.

8. Andre Peter, op. cit. pp. 40,41.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., p. 39.

11. See Murtada Mutahhari, Shinakht, “Epistemology.”

12. For further elaboration see `Allamah Tabitaba'i, Usul-a falsafeh wa rawish-a riydlism, particularly Chapter V, (“The Source of Plurality in Impres-sions”). Also refer to `Allamah Tabataba'i, al-Mizan, vol. XVI, (Persian Translation), p. 190, for discussion on `the Divine Covenant'; also see vol. XXXI, p. 303, for the discussion on the meaning of natural religion. Also refer to other brief comments scattered through this exegesis.

13. Andre Peter, op. cit. p. 246, Appendix III- See also Raymond Aron, op. cit., p. 163. See also Anwar Khameh'i , Tajdid-e nazar talabi az Marz ta Mao, “Revisionism from Marx to Mao,” p. 153.

14. Andre Peter, op. cit., p. 247, Appendix III.

15. Ibid., p. 33.

16. Ibid., p. 248.

17. Ibid., p. 32.

18. Karl Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy, (Moscow), p. 122.

19. See P. Niketin, Elements of Economics, Persian translation by Nasir Zarafshan, page iii, P. Royan, Historical Materialism, (chapter on-production).

20. Anwar Khameh'i, Tajdid-e nazar talabi az Marz ta Mao, “Revisionism from Marx to Mao,” p. 253.

21. Marx, Engels, Selected Works, “Preface to the Critique of Political Economy.”

22. Ibid.

23. Anwar Khameh'i , op. cit., p. 167.
24. Fredrik Engels, Labour in Transition from Ape to Man.
25. A. Peter, op. cit,, 39.
26. Murtada Mutahhari, Qiyam wa inqilab-e Mahdi.
27. Anwar Khameh'e, op. cit., p. 223, quoted from Marx and Engels, Selected Works.
28. Ibid., p. 155.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 181.
31. Ibid., p. 198.
32. Ibid., p. 183.
33. That is, technology and industry and as a result the social superstructure of the industrialized countries advance on a fixed and determined course. The course of movement of societies is a one-dimensional movement. The industrialized countries in every aspect represent the models of what the underdeveloped countries will become at some time in the future, and have not yet reached that stage. The possibility that the underdeveloped countries may reach this stage of development without passing through the stages covered by the industrialized countries of today, is non-existent.
34. Anwar Khameh'i , op.cit., p. 225.
35. By a `real class' what is meant is a group of people whose economic life, and profits and losses are common. An imaginary class on the other hand is supposed to consist of people leading diverse types of social existence but following a single ideology.
36. Anwar Khameh i , op. cit., p..345.
37. Karl Marx, German Ideology, p. 67.
38. Anwar Khameh'i -, op. cit., p. 347.
39. Ibid., p. 357.
40. Karl Marx, German Ideology, pp. 308-309.
41. Anwar Khameh'e, op. cit,, p. 314.
42. Ibid. pp. 319-320.
43. Ibid., p. 340.

Criticism of Historical Materialism

Now that we have dealt with the fundamentals and the conclu-sions of the theory of historical materialism, the time has come to make a critical appraisal of it.

First of all, I would like to point out that my aim is neither to criticize Marx's views scattered in all of his works, nor to appraise Marxism in its entirety. I only intend to evaluate his materialistic interpretation of history or historical materialism, which is one of the basic tenets of Marxism. Basically, the criticism of Marx's views or Marxism as a whole is a different thing from the criticism of one of its elements such as historical materialism.

The criticism of Marx's theories, i.e. the study of his views in totality based upon the entire bulk of his writings belonging to the different periods of his life, and which are full of many contradictions, is a work that has been done by several individuals in the West. In Iran, as far as I know, the book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, from which I have drawn abundantly and quoted extensively in this chapter, is the best book on this topic.[1]

Our purpose here is criticism of historical materialism by analyzing one or more of the fundamental principles of Marxism which in Marx's own view were considered indubitable, and by critically examining one or more principles which Marx himself does not consider as definite, and has occasionally contradicted them in some of his works, but are nevertheless the necessary part of Marxism; since Marx's own contradic-tion is to be regarded as a kind of deviation from Marxism.

Here I have critically examined certain definite and generally accepted principles of Marxism and the conclusions which necessarily follow from them. Our purpose is not to point out all the occasions when Marx has expressed views contrary to his own principles in his writings, which are replete with contradictions. The real target of my criticism is historical materialism and not the theories of Marx in general.

It is one of the wonders of history that in his philosophical, socio-logical, and economic writings Marx is more or less preoccupied with the idea of historical materialism, but while analysing and evaluating certain contemporary historical events, he pays little attention to the principles of historical materialism. Why does he do so? This question has been answered variously.

Furthermore, this attitude is not confined to this issue alone; on several problems of Marxism, Marx's attitude is one of self-contradiction. Theoretically or practically a sort of departure and deviation from Marxism in Marx himself can often be observed. Accordingly, we have to find a comprehensive answer to this question.

Some writers attribute this inconsistency to immaturity and short-comings which he showed in different periods of his life. But this explanation is indefensible at least from the Marxist point of view; the major part of Marxism which is considered today as constituting the Marxist dogma is related to Marx's youth and the middle years of his life, and the most part of what are considered his deviations, including his analysis of contemporary events, belongs to the later period of his life.

Some other writers attribute this difference to his split personali-ty. They claim that on the one hand he was a philosopher and an ideo-logue, which naturally requires of him to be inflexible in his dogmas, trying occasionally to interpret actual events, either by hook or by crook, according to his own ideas. On the other hand, he had a scien-tific temperament and spirit, which always necessitates total acceptance of reality and absence of adherence to any fixed dogma.

Certain other writers make a distinction between Marx and Marxism. They consider Marx and his thinking as only a stage of Marxism. Marxism in itself is considered to be a school of thought in the process of development. There is nothing wrong if Marxism left behind Marx in the course of its development.

In other words, the view that the Marxism of Marx represents the primary stage of Marxism, does not violate the credibility of Marxism as a school. But this group does not explain what in their view which is the essence of Marxism. The main condition for the development of a school is that its basic principles should remain permanent; changes occurring only in secondary matters without affecting the basic principles; otherwise there would be no difference between total rejection and development of a theory.

If we do not consider the permanence of fundamental principles as a condition for its developmental process, then, why not pre-Marxian thinkers, Viz. Hegel, Saint Simon, Proudhon or any other thinker of this type, should be considered as stages in the evolution of this school? Why should not Marxism be regarded as a stage in the development of one of these schools?

In my view, the cause of contradictions in Marx is due to the fact that he himself was lesser of a Marxist than the majority of Marxists. It is said that once in a gathering of ardent Marxists where Marx was trying to defend his position which contradicted his earlier position, he said: “I am not so much of a Marxist as you are.” It is also said that in his later years Marx said: “I am Marx, not a Marxist.”

Marx's departure from Marxism in some of his views is because of the fact that Marx was too intelligent and ingenious to be a hundred percent Marxist. It needs some measure of stupidity in order to be a staunch Marxist.

Historical materialism, which is a part of Marxism and the subject of our present study, as explained earlier, consists of certain fundamentals and corollaries, which neither Marx the scholar could impose upon himself for ever, nor Marx could the philosopher and the thinker accept to be permanently saddled with. Now we propose to critically evaluate this theory.

1. Baselessness

The first objection is that this view is not more than a mere `theory' without any proofs. A philosophical theory of history ought to be based upon observation of contemporary events and historical facts, and should be applicable to other times also. Either it should be formulated on the basis of historical evidence, being in addition applicable to events of the present and the future, or it should have been deduced and inferred from a priori

premises based upon a series of scientific, philosophical, and logical principles.

The theory of historical materialism does not fulfil the conditions of any of the above mentioned methods. Neither the historical events of the times of Marx and Engels can be explained on its basis (as Engels himself has admitted. Engels says that he and Marx made a mistake in emphasizing the importance of the economic factor in some of their works.

But, he adds, they were saved from this error in case of their analysis of contemporary events where they were confronted with historical reality itself), nor the historical events that occurred during thousands of years of human history confirm this theory.

It is amazing to read the writings of some followers of Marxism who dogmatically try to explain the past history in the light of historical materialism, and read their master's opinions into the pages of history, for instance in the book History of the Ancient world.[2]

2. Revision of Views by Its Founders

I have repeatedly mentioned that Marx terms economic founda-tion of society the `infrastructure; and other of its constituents as the `superstructure.' This interpretation is evidently enough to show one--sided dependence of all the other structures on the economic base.

Moreover, Marx explains in many of his writings quoted earlier, that the influence in this relationship is unilateral; i.e. the economic factors are always the influencing factors, while all other social modes are passively influenced. The economic factors act independently and other factors are dependent on them.

No matter in whatever way Marx interprets his basic thesis, his theories always affirm the priority of matter over soul, ,the priority of material needs over intellectual needs, the priority of human sociology over human psychology, and the priority of action over thought.

But Marx, in many of his writings, has raised another issue on the basis of dialectical logic, which may be regarded as a revision of his view and also a kind of departure from absolute historical materialism. That issue is related to the problem of reciprocal causation.

According to the principle of reciprocal causation, the cause-effect relationship should not be regarded as a one-sided process. If `A' is the cause of change in `B', in the same way `B' also in its turn becomes the cause of `A'. According to this principle, there is a kind of reciprocal causal relation between all parts of nature and all parts of society.

For the time being I am not concerned here with the validity or invalidity of this dialectical principle interpreted in this form. But we may say that, according to this principle, the suggestion of priority of one thing over the other is meaningless with regard to causal relation between two things like matter and spirit, or action and thought, or economic base and all other social institutions.

Because if two things are interrelated and dependent upon each other for their existence, and the existence of one is conditioned by that of the other, the question as to which is prior or fundamental, is meaningless.

Marx, in some of his statements, considers all social processes, essential or nonessential, as based upon economic factors, and has not suggested the effect of superstructure on the infrastructure, as referred to earlier.

However, in some of his statements he accepts a reciprocal cause-and-effect relationship between the infrastructure and the super-structure, but maintains that the basic and ultimate role is played by the base. In the book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, two works of Marx, The Capital and The Critique of Political Economy, are compared. The author, while stating that in both the works Marx regards the economic base as unilaterally determining the entire social structure, says:

In spite of this, Marx, consciously or unconsciously, has added a new dimen-sion to this definition by stating that superstructures, despite primacy of the base over superstructures, can play an essential role in society. [3]

The author further asks: What is the difference between the pre-dominant function or `determining role' that the economic infrastruc-ture always plays and the `essential role' played by the superstructures?

It means that if the superstructure occasionally plays the essential role, it becomes the main determining and governing factor. In such cases, it may even be said that what we call the superstructure is not a super-structure but is really the infrastructure or the base, and what we call the infrastructure is the superstructure.

Engels, in a letter written in his later years to one Joseph Bloch, writes:

....According to the materialist conception of history, ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life.[4] More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he trans-forms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase.[5]

The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstruc-ture: political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas, also exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles and in many cases prepon-derate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary.[6]

Strangely enough, if the view that “the economic element is the only determining one” is a meaningless, abstract, and senseless phrase, this phrase has been uttered by no other person than Marx himself.

Moreover, if the elements of superstructure “in many cases prepon-derate in determining historical struggles,” it means that the determin-ing and decisive element is not the economic one. After saying this, there is no need to believe that “the economic movement, amid all the host of accidents, asserts itself as necessary.”

It is more amazing that Engels, in the later part of the same letter, accepts that he himself and Marx may be held responsible for this mistake (or in his own words, twist). He says:

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle vis-a-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into light. [7]

But some other people offer quite the opposite explanation of this excessive emphasis by Marx and Engels on the economic elements. They say, this overemphasis is not meant for their opponents in the other camp, but aimed at disarming the rival supporters of this view in their own camp.

In the book Revisionism from Marx to Mao, the author, after--pointing out that in the Critique of Political Economy Marx has empha-sized the unilateral role of the economic factors more than in any other work-and I have already quoted the well-known passage from the preface to that book-explains Marx's reasons for compiling the Critique:

Another cause of writing the Critique of Political Economy, was the publica-tion of a book by Proudhon, Manuel du Speculateur de la Bourse, and another book by Darimon, the follower of Proudhon. When Marx saw that his rivals in the camp of Proudhon from one side, and the followers of Lassalle from the other side were relying upon the economic element in a reformative (not revolutionary) way, he endeavored to seize this weapon from their hands and used it for the purpose of revolution. This necessitated a rigidity suited to the purpose of popularizing his beliefs.[8]

Mao has reinterpreted the, meanings of historical materialism and economic base according to the requirements of Chinese conditions. His new interpretation was aimed to explain his own role as the leader of the Chinese Revolution also.

His interpretation of historical mater-ialism reaches a point that one finds this theory and its emphasis on the economic base, and as a consequence the so-called scientific socialism whose basis is historical materialism, reduced to mere play of words and nothing else.

Mao, in his treatise on contradiction, under the title, “The Prin-cipal Contradiction and the Principal Aspect of Contradiction,” says:

....The principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and quality of a thing changes accordingly. In a certain process or at a certain stage in the development of a contradiction, the principal aspect is A and the non-principal aspect is B, at another stage of development or in another process of development, the roles are reversed change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the strength with which each of the two aspects struggle against the other in the develop-ment of a thing.[9]

He further says:

Some people think that this is not the case with certain contradictions. For example in the contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; ... in the contradiction between the economic foundation arid its superstructure, the

economic foundation is the principal aspect and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the view of mechanistic materialism.

True, the productive forces, practice, and the economic foundation generally manifest themselves in the principal and decisive roles; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But under certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory, and superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role; this must also be admitted. When the productive forces cannot be developed unless the relations of production are changed, the change in the relations of production[10] plays the principal and decisive role.

As Lenin put it, without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolu-tionary movement. The creation and advocacy of the revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role.... When the superstructure (politics, culture and so on) hinders the development of economic foundation, political and cultural reforms become the principal and decisive factors. By saying this, are we running counter to materialism? No.

The reason is that while we recognize that in the development of history as a whole it is the material essence of things that determines spiritual things, and social existence that determines social consciousness, at the same time we also recognize and must recognize the reaction of spiritual things and social consciousness on social existence, and the reaction of superstructure on economic foundation. This is not running counter to materialism; this is precisely avoiding mechanistic materialism and firmly upholding dialectical materialism.[11]

Whatever Mao says contradicts historical materialism. When he says, “if the relations of production hinder development and progress of the productive force,” or when he says “a revolutionary movement requires a revolutionary theory,” or when he says, “the superstructure hinders the development of economic foundation,” he asserts some-thing which can and should occur always.

But according to historical materialism, the development of the productive force necessarily transforms the relations of production, and revolutionary theory necessarily emerges spontaneously. As a result, the superstructure is necessarily transformed with change in the base.

But Marx has emphatically stated in his preface to the Critique of Political Economy:

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production; or-what is but a legal expression for the same thing-with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution, with the change of economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.[12]

Such notions as the change in relations of production prior to the development of productive forces in order to pave the way for the progress of productive forces, the formulation of revolutionary theories prior to spontaneous birth of revolutionary ideas, the notion that transformation of superstructure transforms the base-all imply priority of thought over action

and priority of spirit over matter. They imply the essentiality and independence of political and intellectual aspects with respect to the economic aspect, and this contradicts historical materialism.

Mao's statement that if the process of effect and action is accepted to be one-sided, dialectical materialism is negated is correct. But what is to be done if the basis of so-called scientific socialism rests upon this very principle of unilateral effect, and contradicts dialectical logic, i.e. the doctrine of unity of opposites, which is one of the laws of dialec-tics?

We are forced to discard either the so-called scientific socialism and reject dialectical logic, or we have to uphold dialectical logic and reject `scientific' socialism and historical materialism, upon which it is based.

In addition to this, what does Mao mean when he says "... we recognize that in the development of history as a whole it is the material essence of things that determines spiritual things, and social existence that determines social consciousness"? Doesn't his own admission that superstructure can reciprocally act on the base, imply that sometimes productive forces determine relations of production and sometimes vice versa, .i.e. the process is reversed?

Sometimes revolutionary move-ment produces revolutionary theories and sometimes vice versa? Some-times politics, culture, power, religion, etc. are the factors responsible for bringing about a change in the economic foundation of society and sometimes the process is reversed? sometimes, it happens that material things decide spiritual matters and social existence determines social consciousness, and sometimes the process is quite reversed?

Actually, Mao's statement that "the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other" is made to justify his Maoist viewpoint-which practically goes against Marxist historical materialism-not to explain the Marxist theory of historical materialism, despite the claim that he does so.

Mao too, like Marx, has practically demonstrated that he is too intelligent to remain a Marxist forever. The Chinese Revolution under Mao's leadership practically violated scientific socialism and historical materialism, and, consequently, Marxism.

Under the leadership of Mao, China overthrew the feudal regime of old China by means of an agricultural revolution to establish a socialist regime in its place. Though according to the theory of scien-tific socialism and historical materialism a country that is at the stage of feudalism should first pass through industrialization and capitalism.

When industrialization reaches its climax, it can proceed towards the goal of socialism. According to historical materialism, as an embryo cannot pass through two stages within one leap, similarly a society also cannot enter into the final stage without passing through the inter-mediate successive stages. But Mao has practically demonstrated that he is one of those midwives who can bring forth a four-month old embryo in healthy and sound condition.

He has proved, contrary to Marx's claims, that all the factors which are regarded by him as elements of consciousness such as leadership, partisan

training, political organiza-tions, revolutionary ideology, social awareness, which do not have concrete existence according to Marx and are regarded by him as part of the superstructure and not the base, can transform the relations of production to make a country an industrial one. In this way the Chinese Revolution has practically ignored the doctrines of so-called scientific socialism.

Mao has also contradicted the Marxist theory of history in another way. According to the Marxist theory though the peasant class fulfils the first and the second conditions of being revolutionary, i.e. they belong to the exploited class and are without property, they cannot fulfill the third condition which demands unity, cooperation, mutual understanding, and awareness of their own power.

Hence the peasant class can never take any initiative for bringing about a revolution. The most they can is to participate in the revolution by following the revolutionary proletariat class in a semi-agricultural and semi-industrial society. Marx sometimes even calls them “the wretched who are re-actionary by nature” and “completely lacking in any type of revolu-tionary initiative.[13]

“In his letter to Engels, dealing with the uprising in Poland, Marx wrote about peasants, “The wretched peasants, reactiona-ry by nature... must not be called to struggle.”[14] But Mao created a revolutionary class out of the same wretched people who are advised not to be called to struggle. This very class overthrew the old regime of China.

According to Marx, peasants are not only incapable of leading ,a country toward socialism, but also they cannot participate in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The class that can lead a society in the transition from feudalism to capitalism arid has a revolu-tionary character at that historic moment is the bourgeois class, not the peasantry. But with the help of the same wretched class reactiona-ry by nature, Mao made a historic leap by traversing two stages in one step, i.e. from feudalism to socialism.

Hence Mao, with the kind of departure he had to make from Marxism, was justified in raising the Maoist idea of `transformation of the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction into each other.'

Instead of proclaiming deviation from Marxism he pretends to follow Marxist theory of historical materialism and scientific socialism by offering a new scholar-ly interpretation.

Mao learnt the lesson from his trusted predecessor, Lenin, that a Marxist necessarily deviates in practice from Marxism.” Before Mao, Lenin brought about a revolution in Russia which was then still a semi--industrial state and founded a socialist state for the first time.

Lenin realized that he could not hope to live to wait patiently for the Czarist Russia to become fully industrialized and to wait for capital-ism and exploitation of workers to reach the ultimate stage so that a spontaneous revolution may occur with a dynamic and conscious movement of its own. He saw that he could not wait for the mother to complete her period of pregnancy.

Accordingly, he started from the superstructure and made full use of such things as party politics, revolutionary ideology, the war, and armed struggle,

and converted the semi-industrial Russia of those days into the Soviet Socialist Republic of today. Lenin practically realized the meaning of the proverb: a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

3. Contradiction of Necessary Correspondence between Base and Superstructure:

According to the theory of historical materialism there is always a sort of correspondence between superstructure and base in societies, to the extent that one can identify the base by means of the superstruc-ture and one can know the superstructure by knowing the base.

When-ever the base is changed, the correspondence between the base and the superstructure is affected, disturbing the social equilibrium and giving rise to crisis, followed sooner or later by a necessary deterioration of the superstructure. And if the base remains in its original state, the super-structure also necessarily remains permanent and unchanged.

Contemporary historical events have practically disproved this Marxian thesis. Taking into consideration a series of economic crises from 1827 to 1847 accompanied with a series of social and political revolutions, Marx and Engels concluded that the social revolutions were necessary and inevitable consequences of economic crises.

But, in the words of the author of Rivisionism from Marx to Mao:

It is the irony of history that there has not been any economic crisis accom-panied with a revolution in industrialized countries since 1848. In the very lifetime of Marx before his death four times forces of production rebelled against relations of production without bringing about any revolution... later, some economists like Joseph Schumpeter have gone to the extent of naming these crises caused by technical innovation as `gales of creative destruction,' and as safety valves for reestablishing economic equilibrium and economic growth.

Countries like England, Germany, France, and America have made great industrial advancement taking capitalism to its peak; but contrary to Marx's prophecy that these countries would be the first and fore-most to experience the workers' revolution and to be converted into socialist states, they have not changed politically, legally, religiously or in other aspects which are termed as constituents of superstructure. The baby whose birth Marx was awaiting has not been delivered despite the lapse of more than ninety years, and there is little hope of it in the future.

Of course, these regimes shall sooner or later be overthrown, but the revolution that is expected can never be the revolution brought about by the working class and the Marxist theory of history shall not be realized. The regimes of so-called socialist countries of today shall also be overthrown, and would not remain as they are now. But the future regime will certainly be not a capitalist one.

On the other hand the countries of East Europe, Asia, and South America have become socialist despite the fact that they have not yet attained the stage of giving birth to a socialist state. We see that there are certain countries quite similar in respect to the (economic) base, but different from one another regarding their superstructure.

Two super-powers, U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., are the best example of this pheno-menon. America and Japan also have the same type of economic regime (capitalistic) but with regard to such aspects as politics, religion, mora-lity, etiquette, manners, and art they are quite different.

In the same way certain countries having similar superstructure, i.e. political regime, religion, etc., are different in respect of economic base. All these cases conclusively prove that the notion of necessary correspondence between superstructure and base as upheld by historical materialism is nothing but a mere illusion.

4. Nonconformity of Ideological and Class Bases

As stated earlier, according to the theory of historical materialism, the superstructure cannot precede the base at any point of history. On the basis of this doctrine the consciousness of every epoch is necessarily associated with that age. With the lapse of every particular period, the corresponding consciousness also expires. Ideas, philosophies, plans, predictions, religions-all are by-products of needs of a certain period and cannot be applicable to those of other periods.

But practical evidence goes against this hypothesis. There are a number of philosophies, personalities, ideas and outlooks-leave alone religions and religious ideologies-which are ahead of their times and their own class interest. There are many ideas that were the pro-ducts of the material needs of a specific period which still remain alive even after the passage of a considerable time, and shine as stars over the horizons of human history.

What is striking is that in this regard, too, Marx in some of his statements departs from Marxism. In German Ideology, he says:

Consciousness sometimes is seen to precede the contemporary empirical relations, to the extent that it is possible to find the evidence for the conflicts of a later age in the writings of theoreticians of the preceding age.[15]

5. Independence of Cultural Developments

According to the theory of historical materialism, cultural and scientific temperament of a society like all the other aspects, viz. political, legal, and religious, is related to its economic mode. It cannot develop in independence from economic development. The develop-ment of science follows the development in the means of production and the economic base of society.

First. of all, it should be noted that the means of production are not capable of developing automatically without human intervention. The means of production develop in the context of man's relationship with nature and his curiosity, inventiveness, and endeavor.

The development in the means of production is accompanied by the growth of science and technology. But the question arises as to which of them comes first: Whether man first invents something and then utilizes it in practice, bringing industry into existence, or if industry comes into existence and then man tends to invent something. It cannot be denied that the second alternative is correct.

It is evident that the discovery of scientific laws and technological methods is made as a result of human inquisitiveness and experimenta-tion.

Without contact with nature, inquiry, research, and experimenta-tion, man can neither discover any scientific law nor perfect any technique.

No one can challenge this view. The question arises only with regard to the priority of man's inquisitiveness, experimentation and growth of his scientific knowledge over tools of technology: whether man first develops his scientific knowledge and then exter-nalizes his knowledge to invent technological tools or vice versa? The validity of the first part of the statement cannot be doubted.

Moreover, it is to be noted that meaning of expressions such as `evolution' and `growth' is literal in the context of human beings, and figurative in the context of technological and productive implements. `Evolution' and `growth' are literal in the case of a real entity which passes from a lower to a higher stage.

The use of `evolution' in the figurative sense applies to an objective entity which does not go through actual evolutionary stages, but which becomes either non-existent or obsolete and is replaced by another entity which is different from it.

In the process of the growth of a child, for example, the develop-ment is real. Now, taking another example, if a teacher teaching a class is replaced by another more qualified and competent, in this case to say that the level of instruction has improved and developed, is a figurative application of the word `development.'

In fact the human progress in manufacture of production tools is a real progress. It is man who develops and progresses intellectually; but the term industrial progress is used in a figurative sense, when what is meant is that every year a more sophisticated, improved, and better equipped model of an auto-mobile comes into the market.

In this type of development there is no objective entity that rises from a lower to a higher stage. The auto-mobile of the last year has not become more developed and perfect, but is discarded and becomes obsolete, and a new automobile takes its place.

In other words, in this kind of development, a deficient individual or object becomes obsolete and is replaced by another which is better and improved; not that the same individual has attained perfection in the course of time. Wherever real development and figurative develop-ment take place side by side, it is quite obvious that the real develop-ment is to be considered the principal development and the figurative development is secondary.

Moreover what we have said applies only to technical knowledge and know-how. In other sciences like medicine, psychology, sociology, logic, philosophy, and mathematics, there is not even the possibility of such a unilateral correlation. Progress in these sciences depends to the same extent or more or less upon the material and economic conditions as the material and economic conditions depend upon the growth of sciences. K. Schmoller, in his refutation of Marxism says:

No doubt, the material and economic conditions are essential for the attainment of higher culture, but to the same extent it is also undoubtedly

true that intellectual and moral development follows an independent course.[16]

If we ignore a defect in August Comte's point of view which con-fines man and humanity to the mind, which is only a part of human faculties and only half of the essence of man, his theory regarding social development is far more valuable than that of Marx. August Comte claims:

Social phenomena are subject to a strict determinism which operates in the form of an inevitable evolution of human societies-an evolution which is itself governed by the progress of the human mind.[17]

6. Historical Materialism Contradicts Itself

According to historical materialism, all thought, all philosophical and scientific theories, and all ethical systems represent certain material and economic conditions, and are inseparably connected with their own specific objective conditions. Hence their value and validity are not absolute, but dependent upon a specific period.

With the lapse of a particular period and changes in the material, economic, and social conditions, which are necessary and inevitable, every idea or thought, every philosophical or scientific theory or ethical system is invalidated and is ultimately bound to be replaced by a different idea, thought or theory.

According to this principle, historical materialism, too, is subject to this universal law. Because if it is not subject to this universal law and is an exception, it would mean that there are some scientific and philosophical laws which are fundamental and independent of any kind of economic base; and if historical materialism is subject to the general law, its value and validity are confined to one period and it is applicable to that period alone which has given rise to it. It is not relevant to an earlier or later period. Thus, in both cases, historical materialism is con-tradicted by itself.

It means that historical materialism as a theory, as a philosophical point of view or as a part of superstructure, either applies to itself or it doesn't. If it does not apply to itself, it contradicts itself. If it is governed by itself, it is valid for a limited period only; it cannot be applied to other periods from which it excludes itself.

This objection is also valid in the case of dialectical materialism, which considers the principle of dialectical movement and the principle of unity of opposites applicable to the whole reality including scientific and philosophical laws.

In the Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism (Vol I, II) I have dealt with these problems. But it is clear that the claim that the universe is the playground of the forces of dialectical materialism and society that of historical materialism is absolutely baseless.

Certain other objections are also valid against historical mater-ialism. For the time being we refrain from mentioning them. But I cannot conceal my amazement as to how such a baseless and unscienti-fic theory could become famous as a scientific theory. The art of pro-paganda is indeed capable of working wonders!

Notes

1. This book was first written in French and then translated into Persian by the author, Dr. Anwar Khameh'i. He has exhibited profound scholarship in the treatment of the subject and praiseworthy capacity for evaluation and analysis of the problems involved. He himself has been once an ardent supporter and exponent of this school for many years.

2. Publisher's note: here the author, Martyr Mutahhari, had left a blank space of several lines in the original manuscript to quote a passage from the book The History of the Ancient World, which was not accessible to the publishers.

3. Anwar Khameh'i , op. cit., p. 222.

4. As the author says, Engels uses the phrase, “production and reproduction of real life,”- instead of “material 'and economic production,” in his book Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State. Engels says that production is dependent not only on the means of subsistence alone, but also on human repro-duction. Implicitly, he does not consider the economy alone as the determining factor, but also believes in the role of such factors as sex and family. This is another deviation from the basic position of historical materialism.

5. Here the author adds in parenthesis: “revisionism, plain and simple!”

6. Marx and Engels, Selected Works, vol. II, p. 443.

7. Ibid., vol. II, p. 444; Apology is worse than crime. In fact it is a kind of obstinacy and, at the very least, equivalent to sacrificing truth for the sake of personal interest..

8. Anwar Khameh'i , op. cit., p. 219.

9. Mao Tse-Tung, Selected Works, “Four Philosophical Treatises,” (London, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1954), vol. II, p. 38.

10. By the means of superstructural factors, such as military, political and educational ....

11. Mao Tse-Tung, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

12. Andre Peter, op. cit,, p. 243.

13. Anwar Khameh'i , op. cit., p. 368.

14. Ibid., p. 348

15. Ibid., p. 173.

16. Ibid., p. 239.

17. Raymond Aron, op. cit., vol. I, p. 78.